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THE NULLITY
OF
THE ROMAN FAITH.

G. WOODFALL, ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET, LONDON.

THE NULLITY
OF
THE ROMAN FAITH;

BEING
A PRACTICAL REFUTATION
OF THE
DOCTRINE OF INFALLIBILITY,

IN A VIEW OF
THE EVIDENCE AND HISTORY OF CERTAIN LEADING
TENETS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

BY THE REV. JOHN GARBETT, M.A.

" Utile est libros plures a pluribus fieri, diverso stylo, non diversa fide, etiam de quæstionibus iisdem; ut ad plurimos, ad alios sic, ad alios autem sic, res ipsa perveniat."

AUGUSTIN DE TRIN.

" By comparing the body of their belief and the ground of their authority, he will come to see, that their pillars are too weak to hold up any building, be it never so light; and their building too heavy to be held up by any pillars, be they never so strong."

LORD FAULKLAND.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND THOMAS BURGESS,

D.D. F.R.S. F.A.S.

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE,
CHANCELLOR OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER,

AND

Lord Bishop of Salisbury,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE,

WITH SINCERE SENTIMENTS OF VENERATION,

AND PERSONAL RESPECT,

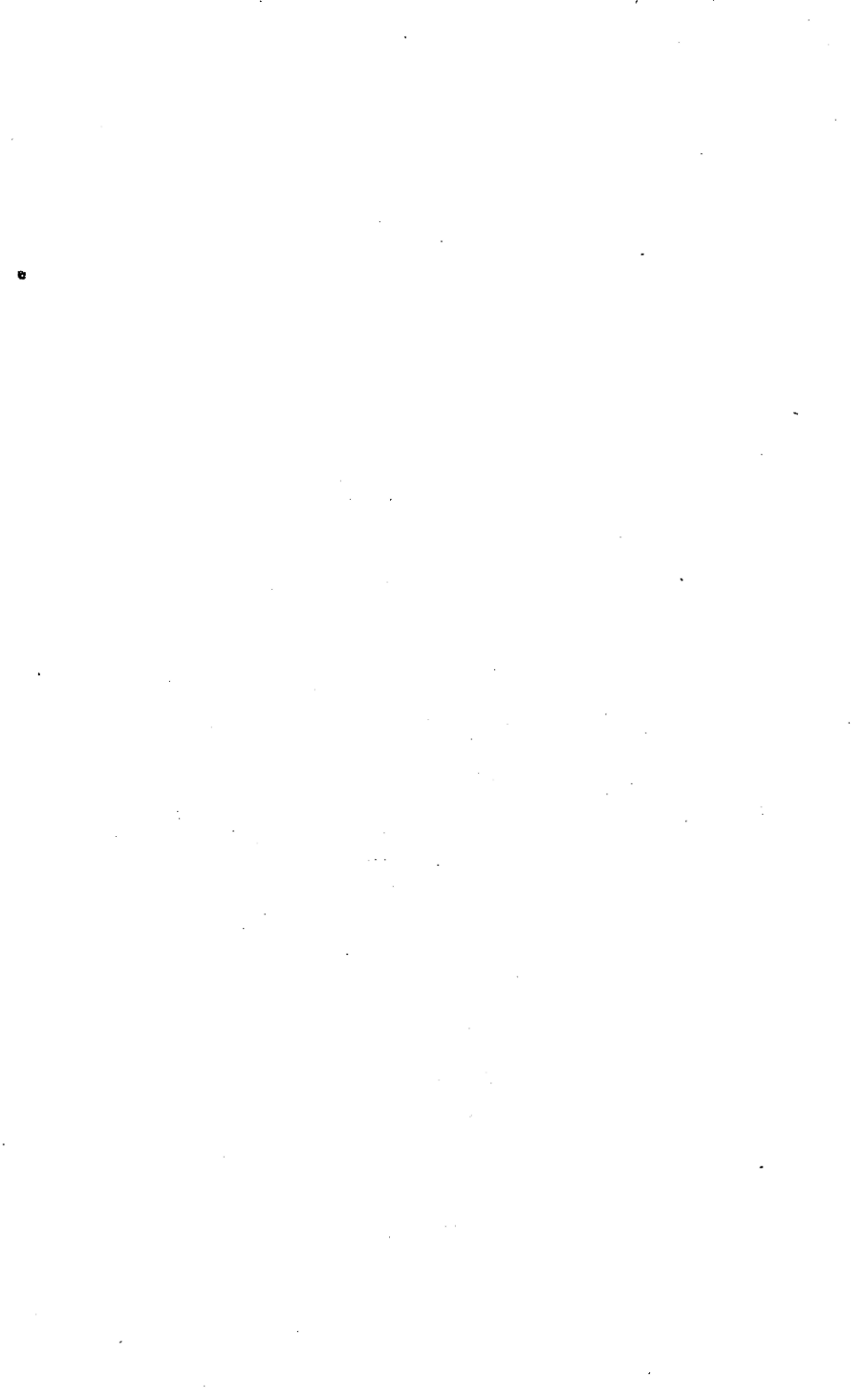
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THE AUTHOR.

COLMORE TERRACE, BIRMINGHAM,
JUNE 20, 1827.

CONTENTS.

	Page
DIALOGUE I. Of Infallibility.....	1
DIALOGUE II. Of Transubstantiation.....	50
DIALOGUE III. Of Communion in one Kind.....	144
DIALOGUE IV. Of the Sacrifice of the Mass.....	159
DIALOGUE V. Of the Sacrament of Penance.	200
DIALOGUE VI. Of Indulgences.....	253
DIALOGUE VII. Of Purgatory.....	283
DIALOGUE VIII. Of Invocation of Saints and Angels...	312
DIALOGUE IX. Of Adoration of Images, &c.....	350
DIALOGUE X. Of the Accusations of Idolatry, Schism, and Heresy.....	360



INTRODUCTION.

“ IF we mistake not the signs of the times,” says a learned prelate, “ the period is not far distant, when the whole controversy between the English and Roman Churches will be revived, and all the points in dispute again brought under review.”* The propriety of this remark acquires confirmation daily; and it is obvious, that few considerations are more urgently to be pressed upon Protestants than the importance of obtaining a correct acquaintance with the real tenets of their enduring and ever-watchful foe; the want of which, did it not present itself almost in every society and upon every occasion, would be sufficiently evinced in the attention paid to, and the influence produced by, the disingenuous and superficial pages of her modern advocates.

However extensive in its ramifications, the entire controversy with Rome is ultimately reducible to two inquiries :—I. Of the Infallibility,—II. Of the Unity, and other Notes, of the Christian Church.

* Bishop of Lincoln’s Ecc. Hist. p. 297.

These points, though indissolubly united *in re*, have not, perhaps, in discussion any inseparable connection with each other; and are to be examined, not as Papal advocates require, by abstract propositions, either applicable to no existing society or to others equally with their own, nor by vague recriminations upon communities, which make not to themselves an exclusive appropriation of Catholic attributes; but by a distinct statement of the Roman pretensions, brought to the test of evidence and fact.

When the following pages were commenced, it was with the contemplation of proceeding to both these heads of discussion. But the mode adopted of handling the first inquiry was found sufficient to occupy a volume, of no larger size than the writer could, in his own opinion, venture to obtrude upon the public. This remark is necessary to explain the silence preserved upon one or two prominent doctrines, especially the Pope's supremacy, which, whilst it possesses an unquestionable connection with the first topic, is the very key-stone of the second.

Whoever is acquainted with the treatises popularly circulated by Romanists, has observed, that it is not so much their custom to dwell upon the evidence in favour of their tenets, as to silence the voice of inquiry by assumptions of Infallibility and Pre-

scription, such as these : “ *The Church of Rome CANNOT err ; therefore, she HAS NOT erred* ” ; and, “ *No date can be assigned to the rise of her doctrines ; no account can be given of their prevalence among Churches hostile to her ; therefore, they are of primitive origin.* ” These assumptions embrace the whole strength of the cause, and are found most successful in the business of conversion. The simple reply would be, to shew, that the Church of Rome *may* err, because she *has* erred ; and that neither the novelty nor the success of her tenets is so inexplicable as her votaries are led to imagine. From a difficulty of meeting with any single work of moderate compass, in which both pretences are extinguished, the following treatise was compiled.

Should the matured student cast his eye upon it, it will probably present little novelty of argument, and slender addition of authority ; for what fortress have our great champions left unoccupied ? Still, however imperfectly *executed*, no apology is requisite for a publication *of this kind*. As long as our Roman disputants fill the world with tracts and volumes, containing little, save argument and evidence a thousand times refuted and repelled, so long the obligation is renewed to all who love and cherish the reformed religion, of resuming those weapons, the success of which, in former ages, was

so decisive. The ponderous tomes of our fathers are ill-suited to the taste of a generally, but not deeply, reading age : and an attention is sometimes paid to the lightest of modern publications, which the most profound of former productions scarcely receive*.

Of those members of our Church (for to the members of the Church the defence of Protestantism seems to be now confined, our Dissenters either standing aloof, or giving the right hand of fellowship to Rome) who have come forward in defence of the reformed religion, and in vindication of that holy band who confirmed it by their blood, the la-

* “ It is not enough that we have had defenders, and that their books are yet in the world. Old writings are laid by, though much stronger than any new ones ; but new ones are sooner taken up and read. The Papists have, of late, been very plentiful, and yet very sparing in their writings ; plentiful of such as run among the simple injudicious people in secret, so that the country swarms with them ; but sparing of such as may provoke any learned man to a confutation : that so they may, in time, disuse us from those studies, and disable the ministry therein, and catch us when we are secure through a seeming peace, and fall upon us when we have lost our strength. And I am much afraid, that the generality of our people, perhaps of the best, are already so disused from these studies, as to be much unacquainted with the nature of popery, and much more to seek for a preservative against it, and a thorough confutation of it.” Baxter’s Safe Religion, Pref.

hours have been principally confined to the out-works of the citadel, for against these the assault has chiefly been directed: our opponents, with the characteristic wisdom of their Church, shrinking from the foundation as far as possible, and instructing us, by their sensitive forbearance, where our strength and their weakness may be found.

It was not merely from a conviction that Romanism is the permanent enemy whose assiduity, as it never slumbers, it is alike the part of duty and of wisdom always to guard against; but from the perusal of Dr. Milner's "End of Controversy", commended by Romanists as the ablest modern defence of their Church;—that the writer of the following sheets was induced to take up his pen. The extraordinary assertions contained in that most uncandid and unchristian volume, provoked the publication of a tract*, which, as it should seem

* "A Letter to the Right Rev. J. Milner, D.D.", &c. (Rivington and Hatchard.) The last epistle written by the bishop was addressed to myself in reference to this, and is said, in the "Catholic Miscellany", to "contain a volume of instruction". A few days after its first appearance, the writer of it departed to "that bourn" where human applause and human censure are of equal value. The imputation contained in it upon the late Sir J. C. Hippesley has already occasioned some discussion; and I shall no further disturb the eulogy of its admirers, than to express a sincere and melancholy regret,

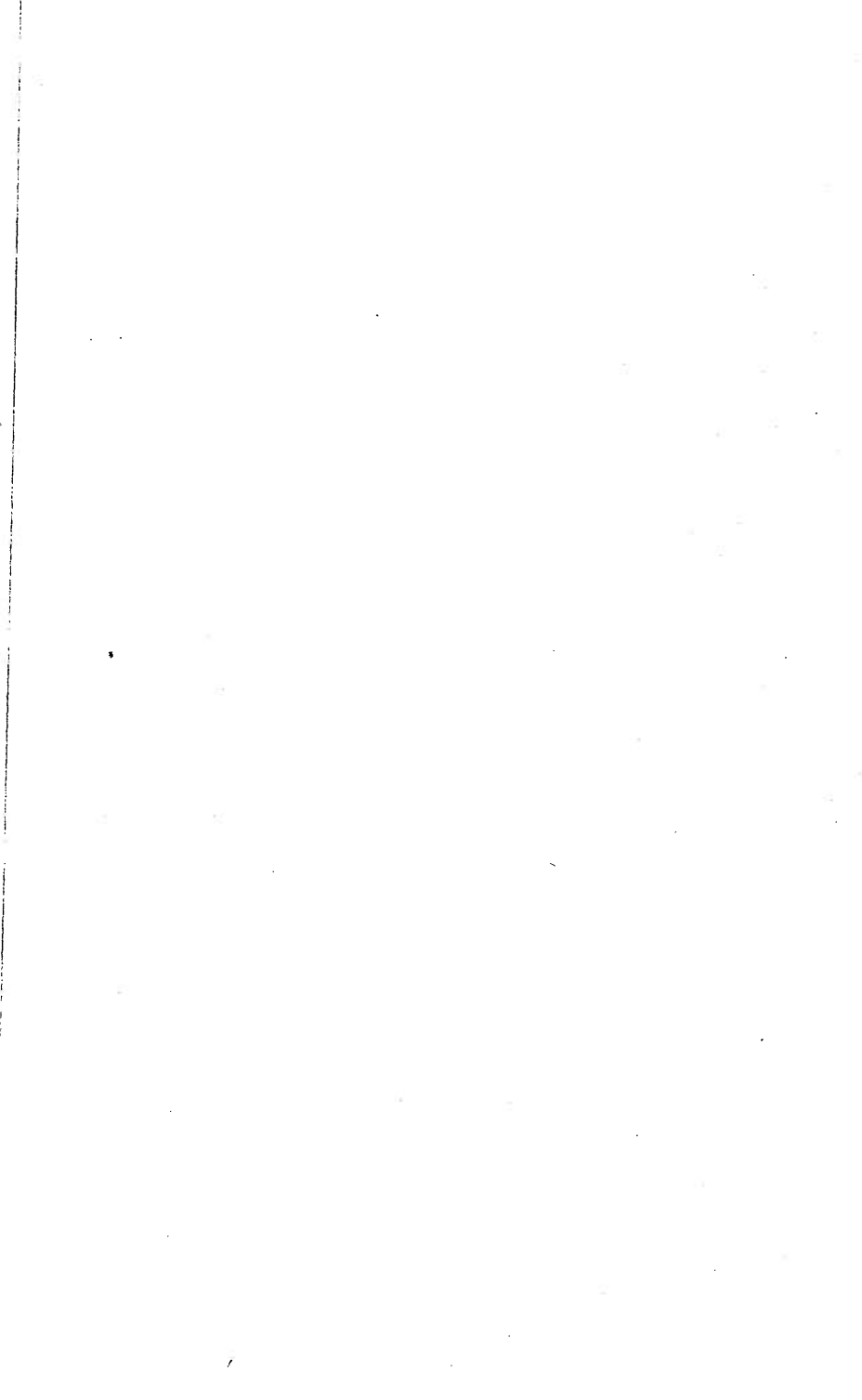
from his last letter, addressed to the author, would have led to a more distinct examination of the merits of the bishop's popular work. The approbation conferred upon that tract, by some to whose judgment the writer owed no common deference, was, probably, the immediate cause of troubling the world with the present work.

Well aware that apology for defects, of which that the moral paralysis of his religion should, to the last, have benumbed the better feelings of a man, in whom there was unquestionably much to venerate; and rendered him insensible to that reproach which the following exquisite passage of Augustin, placed at the opening of the "End of Controversy", conveys against the whole tenor, temper, and execution, of the volume which it ushers into the world.

"Let those treat you harshly, who are not acquainted with the difficulty of attaining to truth, and of avoiding error. Let those treat you harshly, who know not how hard it is to get rid of old prejudices. Let those treat you harshly, who have not learned how very hard it is to purify the internal eye, and render it capable of contemplating the sun of the soul, even truth. But as to us, we are far from this disposition towards persons who are separated from us; not by errors of their own inventing, but by being entangled in those of others. We are so far from this disposition, that we pray to God, that, in refuting the false opinions of those whom you follow, not from malice but imprudence, He would bestow upon us that spirit of peace, which feels none other sentiment than charity, none other interest than that of Jesus Christ, none other wish but for your salvation."

the exposure, at least, is voluntary, can scarcely be admissible, the writer has only to urge, in plea of candid consideration, that his Treatise comes forward with slight pretence, and was written under the pressure of constant interruptions, and in a destitution of those advantages which near access to the treasures of a theological library might have added to his own limited stores.

Be it however what it may, he lays it with sincere affection before the altar of the venerable parent and guardian of his country's faith. It is a contribution, however humble, towards promoting the *best interests* of this kingdom, for its object is to support and vindicate the Church of England.



THE NULLITY
OF
THE ROMAN FAITH.

DIALOGUE I.
OF INFALLIBILITY.

ORTHODOX. PHILODOX.

ORTHODOX.

“**HOLY MOTHER CHURCH** acknowledges her own authority in the administration of the Sacraments”, is the remarkable language with which the Council of Trent, the last and supreme assembly of the Roman faith, forbidding the use of the sacramental cup to the laity, perpetuates the violation of the most solemn ordinance of Jesus Christ. The principle here avowed, superseding, in its exercise, the written word of God, and the tradition of twelve centuries, subjects the one and the other to a paramount authority. A more unqualified assumption of divine jurisdiction; a more flagrant

contempt of the two-fold basis upon which the Church, thus expressing herself, professes to be founded, can scarcely be imagined. And as we see that the immediate operation of this self-acknowledged prerogative not only annuls an institution of God himself, but virtually abolishes the most sacred rite of Christian worship, we are prepared to expect, that such an omnipotent supremacy over the written and unwritten word (if any there be) has not slumbered in other instances, but been allowed to influence, tacitly or avowedly, the respective doctrines and practices of the community by which it is boldly appropriated. A slight acquaintance with ecclesiastical records will suffice to shew, that it has been, indeed, permitted to take an extensive range over the field of theology; to affect other fundamentals of faith; and to bear upon the main topics at issue between the great contending divisions of the Christian world.

PHILODOX.

But it is surely inconclusive to object against the operation of a privilege inherent in the Catholic Church. This "self-acknowledged authority" flows from her infallibility in all points of faith, as the unerring judge of doctrine and discipline; a claim which, of necessity, includes a supremacy

over every branch of the fold of Christ ; and an irresponsible dominion both in teaching and in practice.

ORTHODOX.

Very true. So that if the claim itself be ill founded, the dominion assumed by the Church of Rome over other provinces than her own, is either a usurpation, or, at best, an arrangement of ecclesiastical order ; to decline or continue, as expediency obtains or ceases.

PHILODOX.

But if well founded, all that vast expanse of Christendom which has for so many ages been severed from her in the Greek, Oriental, and African Patriarchates ; in the Waldensian, Moravian, and other Churches ; together with the congregations of that wide defection from her pale which the Reformation produced, are respectively and collectively involved in the guilt of schism ; and deservedly obnoxious to the heavy sentence of anathema and excommunication which she regularly denounces against them.

ORTHODOX.

I do not object to the consequence.—The pretence of infallibility is then of allowed necessity to the existence of the Church of Rome in her pre-

sent form, and to that empire which, three centuries ago, she exercised over nearly the whole of the Western Churches ; which she yet enjoys over a large portion of the fairest part of the universe ; and which she claims, *jure divino*, over the entire Christian world ; warning those who have seceded from her walls, that prescription cannot annul a sacred title ; and that she views them as renegades and rebels, amenable to her jurisdiction, whenever she may be prepared to exercise it. It is necessary, above all, to the maintenance of such tenets and customs as are alien to the law of God, or unsanctioned either by that or by primitive tradition.

It is apparent, therefore, that the first point at issue between the Churches is this of Infallibility, and it virtually involves every other. For if the Roman Church hath a clear, incontrovertible promise from God of inerrancy in matters of faith, all discussion about specific doctrines is at an end. She teaches conclusively, when she denounces rejection of her authority as rebellion against Christ, and secession from her bosom as schism from the universal Church. That such an attribute as infallibility should be permanently conferred on any succession of men ; that it should have been for ages deposited in hands morally the most unfit, polluted by every crime that can defile human na-

ture, or argue the absence of holy agency and principle, may appear strange, paradoxical, inexplicable. Nevertheless, if, by testimony palpable as that which satisfies the pious enquirer in receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the Church of Rome can establish to herself a promise of this kind; or if, in defect of full evidence, it be *bonâ fide* true that she never has erred in fundamental tenets, the dispute seems to be closed. She is scarcely more called upon to explain seeming obliquities, than religion itself is required to discharge every doubt which finite reason may suggest. It is not obvious, that the revolted sects have any other course to pursue, than to sue for grace and reconciliation.

But again, the admission of this privilege involves so many difficulties; it seems so contrary to direct passages of the sacred volume; it so completely repels that reasonable enquiry, that “searching of the scriptures”, that “proving all things”, &c. constantly commanded by the holy writers; and it appears to be contradicted by such a mass of unquestionable fact, that the evidence for it ought to be as clear as that by which eternal life is covenanted to repentant man.

In discussing this topic, the first step will be to look for the person or society in whom infallibility

is vested. We have a right to expect that they who, by unerring guidance, are preserved from the discords which perplex less favoured communities, should be unanimous on this grand point; that they should, *una voce*, direct us to the individual or party on which the divine charter has conferred this endowment. Here, I repeat, we have a right to expect universal concord among them; because, if they disagree in directing us, they cast, at the outset, a stumbling-block in the way. Infallibility fails in the vital point; it is inefficient to conduct us to itself, which is the main defect alleged against holy scripture, and for the remedy of which a living guide is constituted. This is the primary article of their creed; for, as the Apostle proclaims that faith is produced "by hearing the word of God", so Romanists teach, that the word of God itself derives its certainty from the certainty of this; therefore nothing less than unanimity hereupon can satisfy. If they wrangle about it, their opponents will not cease to decry the reality, or, at least, the utility, of such a guide; since those who are destitute of it, can dispute about nothing greater than the fundamentals of faith; and this is so a fundamental that schism is involved either in the denial or in the misapplication of it. We shall need an infallible director to lead us to

the unerring oracle ; and so on, along that concatenation of successions which has been accounted fatal to atheistical reveries, and is not peculiarly indulgent to this Roman hypothesis. Now here we might consistently pause, and call upon them to settle the point authoritatively; which, under infallible direction, they can surely do; and to present us with a proposition definitive and distinct, before they call upon us to yield our eternal interests to the arbitration of a sovereign judge of faith and conscience. It would be vain mockery to tell a man that he is the assured heir of a valuable estate, which somewhere exists in the compass of the globe, but uncertain in whether of its great divisions.

PHILODOX.

You are aware that their disputes on this topic are now buried, and that all of them agree, that the Church collective is infallible; and that the Pope's decrees are so, at least, when the several Churches have consented to receive them.

ORTHODOX.

That all are agreed, because disputes are hushed, is no more true than that all controversies among Protestants are settled, because a general stillness at this time prevails.—You have given the re-

ply of their modern advocates, and it is the only one which the case admits. But upon their own principles it is entitled to no attention, being a mere private opinion, unsanctioned by any decision of the Church. It is moreover a reply which can satisfy none but those who have already yielded their reason to the bridle of this authority. They are agreed, it seems, to let the controversy, which so long raged among them, slumber at present. But this has more the appearance of a hollow truce, to enable them to turn their arms against the common foe, than the settlement of a vital principle of faith. Whenever the question has been put, Is the Pope infallible? or, Is a General Council so? no accordant answer has been obtained. Far more difference of opinion was found to reign on this key-stone of their religion, than has pervaded any other Church. No greater harmony even now obtains among them than the promulgation of this ill concocted tenet conveys:—All Romanists are agreed, that a Pope and General Council are infallible; and that the Pope is infallible when all Churches have consented to receive his decrees. Point out a doctrine of theology teeming with greater absurdities! It is a mere cloak cast over the weakness of failure and contention. To say that inerrancy derives its essence from error, that

infallibility is a compound of fallibles, seems a mass of contradiction; for, as to the first part of the tenet, Either Pope and Council are fallible separately, and if so, then conjointly—as a thousand cyphers cannot make a unit: or, they are infallible separately, and then the like conjointly. And who is to decide between them, when they denounce, excommunicate, and anathematize each other; which has repeatedly been the case? With respect to the second part; Does the inerrancy of a papal decree depend upon the concurrence of a string of Churches, each of which, confessedly, may err on other points, and therefore on this?

Separate these discordant parties, and they agree with us. Those who maintain that a Council is necessary to infallibility, do hereby admit, that there is no living unerring judge of faith; and that all the promises supposed to convey infallibility to St. Peter were personal to him, and devolved not upon his successors. They who deny this, and cleave to the alone inerrancy of the Pope, do likewise accord with us, that all the texts quoted to prove infallibility in Councils, or the Church collective, are erroneously urged, and prove nothing to the purpose; so that no one need take further trouble than to read the books on both sides; to place Bellarmin and Baronius against De Marca, Launoy, or Dupin; and

he will find that they ably prove where infallibility is NOT to be found, and powerfully refute each other as to where it is to be found.

PHILODOX.

But can an objection be made to the Roman Faith because this point has not been strictly defined? "With respect to our national constitution", says Dr. Milner, "some lawyers hold, that a royal proclamation, in such and such circumstances, has the force of a law; others, that a vote of the House of Lords or Commons, or both houses together, has the same strength; but all subjects acknowledge, that an act of King, Lords, and Commons, is binding upon them, and this is sufficient for all practical purposes."

ORTHODOX.

The cases are not parallel. The one is fundamental to faith; the other unimportant even to civil polity. That the whole legislation is vested in king and parliament has been definitively settled by the Revolution; but it is the want of such settlement among Romanists that is the point complained of. When any dispute between Pope and Church springs up, they are precisely in the state of this nation before the Revolution. They are

perfectly ignorant to whom duty is owing ; whether to either, both, or neither : as king and parliament separately demanded obedience on peril of treason, so have Pope and Council each required subjection on pain of eternal perdition. Let them shew us any definite settlement universally acquiesced in by orthodox Romanists, and we will not dispute about trivial differences, as to the force of bulls and decrees “ in such and such circumstances ” ; but until then, the whole objection comes with a force which no tenet of their Church enables them to repel.

We will suppose ourselves, however, extricated from this labyrinth ; we will presume that the oracle, hitherto dumb, has at length announced his lineage, qualifications, and residence ; for unless this be supposed, all enquiry is perfectly useless.

PHILODOX.

It is then the doctrine of the Church of Rome that there is a permanent existing judge of all controversies ; that he is infallible in matters of faith ; that to his testimony the scripture is indebted for its authority ; that he is the sole interpreter of the written word, and of Catholic tradition.

ORTHODOX.

And all the rest of the world denies that there

is, or, since the death of St. John, has at any time been an infallible ruler or judge of controversy, distinct from holy writ.

PHILODOX.

Romanists derive their first proof from the analogous case of the Jews ; and thus they argue :—Infallibility was granted to the Hebrew dispensation, which was temporary in duration and preparatory in kind ; and which far less required it, as being long honoured with means of immediate access to the Deity, and afterwards blessed with a series of inspired teachers raised up, from time to time, among them. How much more shall such a guide be granted to the last and perfect dispensation ? How much more is it needed by the gospel, which is destitute of many external advantages which the Jewish theocracy possessed ?

ORTHODOX.

The existence of such privilege, if such there was, under the Hebrew revelation, affords no analogy for the like under the Christian, wherein the service is more spiritual, the light more clear, the sacred intentions more unfolded, and the grace vouchsafed more abundant. The gospel too is, admittedly, destitute of many visible advantages

which the elder religion-enjoyed; so of this among the rest. We have here, however, but bare opposition of argument; and the present is a question not to be settled by abstract reasoning, but by testimony.

PHILODOX.

The following ordinance of the law of Moses is considered to be decisive for the existence of such a privilege among the Jews.—“If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose; and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: and thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the Lord shall choose, shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: according to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously,

and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die; and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.”* You will, perhaps, object that there was great difference of opinion among the Jews as to the persons on whom this authority was conferred; some of their rabbins applying it to the civil magistrates; others to the Sanhedrim; and others, as Josephus, to both these collectively, together with a prophet, when there was one. But this forms no real objection; because, were it even a mere civil grant, it must have been directed to some individual or society.

ORTHODOX.

If it was a mere civil enactment, the controversy, as to the persons, would not appear unnatural, considering the revolutions and vicissitudes which the Jewish nation underwent; but if it conveyed an ecclesiastical infallibility, it could not have been a subject of dispute, since the succession of the priesthood never failed.

In considering the terms of the grant, I cannot admire the acuteness or discretion which derives a claim of doctrinal infallibility from it to the Hebrew Church. The epithets, “matters of con-

* Deuteronomy, xvii. 8—12.

troversy" respecting "blood and blood, stroke and stroke, plea and plea," explain it to be a law, directing, in all difficult litigations, an appeal to a supreme court; and conferring upon that court, not an infallible, but an uncontrollable authority, with the power of the sword. The litigant who pertinaciously disobeyed the supreme tribunal, was to be put to death. It affords, therefore, as cogent a charter for destroying obstinate heretics, as for establishing infallibility; and so in fact it is applied; yea, even in this country, where the popular Romish version of the scriptures explains it to that purpose.

And what are the results from such an assumption, but similar to those which attend a like claim on the part of Rome? If the argument be good, then Jerusalem was pure when drunk with the blood of the prophets; the tiara was unpolluted when it rested on the brow of a Sadducee; the Church unanimous when torn by heresy and schism; nay, it was an infallible sentence which condemned, as a blasphemer, the Incarnate Saviour of mankind; and the Jews, in rejecting the testimony which God bare to his Son, obeyed a tribunal in whom His revealed word had placed inerrancy of decision.

PHILODOX.

“ The law had then run its destined course, and the divine assistance failed the priests in the very act of rejecting the Messiah who was before them.”

ORTHODOX.

What is this but encumbering one difficulty by a greater, and transferring to God the guilt of that awful deed? The law had NOT “ run its destined course ” until after the death of Christ. It was so far from being repealed, that whatever real privileges its rulers possessed, Christ had enjoined submission to but a few days before. To say that God had promised to them infallibility of decision, and that this was unwittingly withdrawn in the most solemn action of its exercise ; what more can be said to justify their horrid sentence, and vindicate those who acquiesced in its justice? This is, therefore, a barely-concealed acquiescence in the opinion of Hosius, and others of their communion, who daringly avow that the condemnation of our Lord was “ just and true ”. But in fact the Jews have not discovered for themselves so specious a justification as the Romish comment on their law affords.

The argument for human infallibility veils every

enormity, and vindicates every corruption: as in the case before us, it canonizes the traditions by which the Jews had “made the commands of God of none effect”; and washes away the guilt of that righteous blood, by the shedding of which the measure of their enormities was consummated.—Not only, therefore, is analogy found wanting; but far more explicit evidence will be required to establish the existence of infallibility in the Christian Church.

PHILODOX.

The following is the first passage of the New Testament quoted to prove unerring guidance in the Church:—“If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

ORTHODOX.

I perceive not, what this has to do with infal-

* St. Matthew, xviii. 15, 16. 18.

lible authority in matters of faith. Here is an exhortation, that when private and friendly conference has failed to pacify a pertinacious man, the particular Church to which the party belongs, shall be called upon to interfere; and if he despises the monition of the Church, then let a man thus dead to truth and love be accounted as a heathen; having cast off that humility which is the most prominent feature of sincere faith, and that charity, "without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead" before God. And this sentence of the Church, thus conformable to the divine law (and by parity of reason every other such sentence), shall be ratified in heaven. What has all this to do with the question of infallibility? Does the duty of promoting peace in *every* Church, prove the doctrinal infallibility of *one particular* Church? Or is every private contention to be carried to the See of Rome? A respectful deference to legitimate ecclesiastical discipline is here inculcated; but if infallibility be taught, it is that of each duly constituted congregation of believers.

PHILODOX.

But annexed to the above ordinance, is this promise, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

ORTHODOX.

We have in these words a consoling promise of Christ's especial presence in the devotions of his people. Nor do we doubt, that his gracious Spirit and mediation are infallibly theirs. But, if his presence conveys inerrancy of judgment, it is conveyed to every pious family. And if the passage could be wrested to imply a promise to an ecclesiastical council, it is given on the express condition that they be "gathered together in the name of Christ", i. e. under his commission; guided by his law; acting according to his will; and seeking his glory. Doubtless all councils, and all families, thus assembled shall not fundamentally err.

PHILODOX.

The commission given by Christ to the Apostles at his departure is this, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the world." They argue, that this proves the perpetual right of the Catholic Church to preach and announce the truths of the gospel, which they cannot do unless they have an unerring rule to go by.

ORTHODOX.

Certainly not; and they have therefore an unerring rule in the volume of scripture. The *commission* is general to all the Apostles: who is to limit it to those who hold communion with the successors of one alone? The *promise* is suspended on condition that they "teach" only such things as Christ commanded. If it be a promise of infallible teaching, it is so to the whole ministry; which is certainly more than our opponents will allow.

PHILODOX.

But is not an infallible guidance directly promised in these words? "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come."*

ORTHODOX.

These words were addressed to the Apostles. Our Lord promises so to supply his absence to each and all of them, when scattered abroad, that his departure, far from being injurious, should be expedient for them. The promise, in strict application, belongs to them alone; for to it is an-

* St. John, xvi. 13.

nexed the gift of prophecy, to which even the Pope himself lays no claim. Still the benefits conferred by these words are for the Church in general. The Spirit brought back to the recollection of the Apostles every thing necessary for the office of teachers; and spread before their eyes a prophetic view of the future state of Christianity. This they consigned to writing for the perpetual instruction of believers, until the consummation of all things. And thus it is true that the same Spirit leads every sincere Christian infallibly into all truth necessary to salvation. What has this to do with the supreme dictation of a particular Church? For, although we are arguing generally upon the subject, yet we can never lose sight of this, that Rome alone lays claim to such attribute, and therefore the abstract consideration of infallibility must always unavoidably have oblique reference to her.

PHILODOX.

St. Paul, writing to Timothy, calls the Church, "the pillar and ground of the truth", thus teaching that the truth of faith, as to us, rests and is built upon the indefectible authority of the Catholic Church.

ORTHODOX.

It is no slight objection to the arguments ad-

duced for this infallibility, that they are grounded upon passages, either irrelevant, metaphorical, or hypothetical; instead of resting, like every other fundamental tenet, upon plain and distinct declaration. This is the case with the text before us, which is accounted the strongest in scripture upon the point.

I. It is an objection of Chillingworth, that not to the Church, but to Timothy, does the metaphor apply:—"that thou mightest know how to behave thyself in the Church of God, (being) a pillar and basis of truth"; for to that powerful disputant it seems improbable that the Apostle should, in the same sentence, term the Church a "house", and a "pillar and basis" of the same. St. Paul, moreover, uses the epithet "pillar" to designate a chief ruler; so denominating Peter, James, and John*; and the promise of our Lord to every stedfast believer is, "he shall be a pillar in the temple of God"†. This interpretation is not unsupported by the Fathers, who discovered it to be a metaphor familiar to the writings of profane authors. Thus Tertullian terms St. Paul himself the "immoveable pillar of discipline"‡; and Gregory Nazienzen applies the very text before us to

* Gal. ii.

† Apoc. iii.

‡ Ad Pud. c. xvi.

Eusebius of Samosata *. Many other examples may be adduced to the purpose. This is not, therefore, a mere Protestant gloss of Chillingworth. Erasmus speaks of it as the opinion of some in his time, and quotes Augustin in its favour.

II. Others have maintained, that the “pillar and ground of truth” is that fundamental doctrine, the incarnation of the Son of God, which, in the next sentence, is made the basis of revelation; the “great mystery of godliness” unfolded in the gospel: and that the passage must thus be rendered; “That thou mightest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God. A pillar and ground of truth, and, confessedly great, is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh”, &c. Other interpretations may be found among the ancients; which, whether valid or otherwise, are a proof that they drew not from the passage the Roman inference.

The authority of tradition, and the popular translations fix the meaning as it is generally understood; and there is no cause for unsettling it. Be it then that St. Paul terms the Church, “the pillar and ground of truth”, it is not the *universal*, but a *particular* Church that he so designates; and *that*, not the Church of Rome, but the Church

* Ep. xxix.

of Ephesus, in which Timothy was to behave himself as a faithful ruler ; remembering that the preservation of the truth was the object of her calling.

Here we cannot but notice a sophism and artifice which Rome and her advocates scruple not to wield at pleasure. If reproofs, denunciations, and warnings, are directed in scripture to any particular Church, she is left to bear her own burden ; they belong to none but to the offending community, or to heretics. If, however, commendations, promises, or privileges be addressed to Jerusalem or Philippi, or Antioch, Rome steps in and secures them all ; she has an especial grant to seize and appropriate the whole to her own use.

The terms then in question, understood in the allowed sense, signify the stability either of the universal, or of some particular, Church. If of the universal, then every Christian maintains, as an article of faith, that the universal Church can never totally fall, nor cease to sustain the truth. But if it means the indefectibility of a particular Church, surely it must be that of the Church to which the words are addressed. But that Church has long since fallen ; together with her glorious sisters of Asia, which were then the " candlesticks in the hand of the Son of Man ". The faith of Rome, indeed, in those days was famous throughout the

world ; but not more so than that of Philippi, and Thessalonica, and Philadelphia ; over whose shattered relics civil and spiritual desolation has for many ages waved its gloomy banner.

Neither is Timothy sent by St. Paul to learn the truth from any unerring person or community ; but is commanded so to provide for his Church in preserving sound doctrine and holy discipline, that therein the truth may obtain a steady settlement, fixed on a column immoveable.

True it is, a buttress or pillar sustains an edifice : but still more truly is itself sustained and upheld by it. The Church is an instrument in upholding the faith ; but the faith is the very essence and being of the Church. “ The gospel”, says St. Irenæus, “ which the Apostles preached, they afterwards delivered to us in the scriptures, to be the foundation and column of our faith.”* Therefore, we are not to judge the truth by the Church, but the Church by the truth. “ We must seek the Church in the scriptures”, as Augustin directs.

This text, however, would lead us to a wide field of controversy. Briefly then the term “ pillar” denotes solidity, not indefectibility. Applied to a particular Church, it may signify the difficulty not the impossibility, of removing the truth there-

* Ad Hær. L. III. c. I.

from ; no more than the addition of a column to an edifice implies that the one or the other is inexpugnable. Every defender of the truth is a pillar thereof. Athanasius was so ; he fell not ; but *could* have fallen. Hosius was for many years a steady pillar of the Nicene faith ; but he was at length undermined, and sunk with the rest. Pope Liberius was long a pillar of the same, but the biting frost of adversity enervated his stability, and he most shamefully fell. When St. Basil calls Musonius, the “pillar and ground of truth”, he did not suppose that the courageous prelate was infallible. When St. Gregory Nyssa terms all builders of the Church, “lights and pillars”, he does not mean that all ministers are indefectible ; that their steadiness is not to be shaken, nor their flame extinguished. The Church which the Apostle lauds with this eulogium to Timothy, fell ; therefore others may fall also. The commendation implies not the unvaried practice, but the invariable duty, of every Christian community. And what can be more powerful to remind her in the hour of defection, of the height whence she has fallen, than language of which conscience might warn her she was become most unworthy ? Does not this hypothetical phraseology abound in scripture ? “Rulers are not a terror to good works”, says St. Paul.

But is this, *de facto*, always so? Were rulers “not a terror to good works”, when at the era in which this sentence was written, they persecuted the Church of God? “A divine sentence”, says Solomon, “is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.” What would be said, if any such passage as this could be suited to the Bishop of Rome? And yet, how feeble would be an argument drawn from language so peremptory? Surely the wise man asserts not what always is, but reminds monarchs what always ought to be, their practice. “Ye are the salt of the earth”, says Christ to his first ministers, “ye are the light of the world”; which is what they are bound to be, not what they constantly are; for he adds, “the salt may lose its savour”, and “the light within thee” may be “darkness”.

That the Church now is, and always *ought* to be upright; therefore she always *shall be*, is a sorry inference. Suppose the Church of Rome really could, as she constantly labours to prove, that the eulogies bestowed on the Jewish Church were all her own; would it prove more than that she may fall, as the other did? Jerusalem was an “habitation of righteousness”; yet the prophet Isaiah spake not heresy, when he declared, “The faithful city is become an harlot”.

PHILODOX.

Is not the Church the spouse of Christ, and governed by her bridegroom? Is not the Eternal Spirit the soul which actuates her? But if the Church may err in the faith, then error must be imputed to Christ, and to the Spirit. Is not Christ, by the vow which weds him to the Church, bound to preserve her from error?

ORTHODOX.

To the Jewish Church Christ was also wedded: "Thy Redeemer is thy husband". She fell from her faith, and was divorced. The union of the Christian Church to her heavenly Spouse would, therefore, afford no proof that she may not fall likewise. But we have his gracious promise—NOT that she shall not err; NOT that she may not fall in part; but—that she shall never totally and finally err unto destruction. The government of Christ and his Spirit extends not beyond its end. It neither is, nor can be, perfectly efficacious in this world. Every divine gift must be suited to the capacity of the receiver; nor does the incompleteness of the effect argue the imperfection of the agent, but the incapacity of the subject. The bride is not less defiled by sin than by heresy. She is but betrothed here on earth; prepared by his

Spirit to be presented pure and spotless to her heavenly bridegroom in a better world. The argument proves too much ; if it were valid, every true believer would be infallible ; for every true believer is governed by Christ, and guided by his Spirit.

PHILODOX.

I am not aware of additional scriptural authority, which can prove more than the passages already brought forward : but there are considerations of great importance which appear to establish the necessity of infallible guidance in the Church.

ORTHODOX.

It is not a question of infallible guidance. We are agreed, that there is an infallible guide in the scriptures. But it is of the certainty of a living guide. To believe in the existence of this, is pressed as a primary article of divine faith ; it can never therefore be so established by any reasoning, however plausible, as that the disbelief of it should involve the guilt of schism. Faith rests on divine testimony ; it “ cometh by hearing ; and hearing by the word of God.” Sacred truth hath its own proper evidence, even that “ which cannot lie, nor be deceived ”. Unless, therefore, it be clearly established, by divine testimony, that God hath ap-

pointed an infallible living judge of controversy ; and that he hath indefeasibly united it to the succession of the Romish See ; if their writers were to fill volumes with specious disquisition, it is entitled to no more attention than the speculations of so many private theologians or philosophers. It must be brought to the touchstone of “ the law and the testimony ”.

Easy is it, to build up an edifice very goodly and pleasant to our perverted eye. The Gnostic, the Manichee, the Moslem, have done it long ago ; the Unitarian, the fanatic, and the moralist does it every day ; and the Romanist has too often built with the like “ untempered mortar ”. But these Babel fabrics will not endure ; for the basis is but sand. They are not laid on the sole foundation ; they are not sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb : therefore, at the day which trieth every work, the destroying angel shall not pass over them.

Would it not have been better that all men should have been secured from error ; that neither heresy should obtain, nor sin exist ? So to our finite reason it appears. Yet we may not doubt, that all will ultimately redound far more to the glory of Him “ of whom and to whom are all things ”, than if such obliquities had never corrupted a universe

of light and beauty. Resignation, patience, and holy confidence; mercy, loving-kindness, and self-denial, are virtues peculiar to a *fallen* state; yet these are they which “work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”; a reward more excellent than man, unfallen, should have attained. God is glorified, above all, in the stupendousness of His mercy. That mercy hath fallen sinners for its object. Hence are we told, that over the mysteries of redemption even angels are suspended in astonishment of praise. We know not the depth either of the wisdom or goodness of God. It is His to give as His allwise pleasure dictates; it is ours to receive and adore; to be thankful and obey; not presumptuously to arraign **WHAT IS**, by empty supposition of **WHAT OUGHT TO BE**.

But I forbear, with one suggestion. If we are to proceed indulging vague imaginations, may we not ask, whether schisms and divisions, disgraceful as they are, are more injurious to the Church, than the prevalence of vice and wickedness in its members? Lamentable as are the consequences of error in faith, is it more hateful than licentiousness of life, in the presence of Him who is of “purer eyes than to behold iniquity.” without abhorring it? Would that the Roman Church had always shewed

as much zeal against heresy of conduct, as she has towards obliquity of opinion.

I am willing, however, to hear any abstract argument that, directly and properly, bears upon the question.

PHILODOX.

As it is needful to have living judges to expound the laws of the land, so it is far more requisite to have living authorized expounders of the law of God.

ORTHODOX.

It is amazing, that a proposition thus simple should occupy so large a portion of discussion in the writings of most of the Roman advocates. The question is absolved by another yet more simple. Does any Church call in doubt the necessity of living authorized expounders of the divine law? or the duty of the people, to hear, obey, and reverence them, so long as they adhere to the commission which human power can give no licence to pass, of “teaching to observe all things” whatever Christ commanded? When you meet with this argument, substitute the real one:—are all ministers of Christ to derive their entire authority from a single bishop? for that is the sole dispute. What connexion is there between these propositions;—every Church must have authorized expounders of

the word of God ; therefore all must draw their commission from the See of Rome ? What would you say to a man who, because you acknowledge, that every country must have legal magistrates, should insist that all must derive jurisdiction from the Emperor of China ; and that, whoever denies this, thereby becomes a rebel, excluded from the pale of civil society ? You would be apt to doubt the sanity of the disputant. Now, if the cases are not parallel, let it be shewn.

PHILODOX.

Does not the authority of scripture depend on the authority of the Church ; insomuch that Augustin remarks, he would not “ believe it, if the authority of the Church did not move him to it ” ? What evidence have we but Church authority for believing the Bible, more than any other book, to be the word of God ?

ORTHODOX.

This argument has never appeared to me very weighty ; although some sensible persons attach much importance to it. But surely there is no great force in it. For if the scriptures are inspired, the authority of the Church can add nothing to them ; if they are not inspired, she cannot make them so.

PHILODOX.

A distinction must be made here. Although scripture hath authority, quoad se, in itself, from its inspiration ; yet quoad nos, as to us, its authority is from the Church alone.

ORTHODOX.

This distinction has induced the Romish writers to make many profane remarks upon the subject. It seems frivolous in itself. To talk of an authority, not “as to us”, is to talk unmeaningly. Authority is relative to them who owe it subjection ; and the authority of scripture is simply the virtue which it hath, as the law of God, to enforce obedience. Therefore to say that the law of the Ruler of the Universe hath no authority to bind man but what it derives from man, is to render the ordinances of God subservient to the pleasure of his creatures. Those scriptures which all acknowledge, no matter by what testimony known, have inherent authority to bind the obedience of all who hear them. The claim of a Church to jurisdiction must depend upon the testimony of scripture ; which implies previous knowledge of scripture itself. The Church, in bearing evidence to the divine word, acquires no dominion over you thereby ; any more than a courtier who leads you to the king,

derives a portion of the royal authority. The Church of Rome can have no higher claim than that which her testimony affords to the genuineness of the sacred volume. But in considering the evidence of Scripture, there is first the internal evidence.

PHILODOX.

“ Bishop Porteus”, says Dr. Milner, “ argues from the characters of divine wisdom in it ; but he is the only one who attempts to find Scripture by this.”

ORTHODOX.

The remark made by Dr. Porteus is Archbishop Secker's, and the comment of Bishop Milner is the sneer of an infidel. The Almighty, it seems, hath no witness for Himself but that which the Church of Rome condescends to afford. Those who have most devoutly studied, and most profoundly inquired into the evidence of holy writ, have come to a far different conclusion ; and pronounced, that, wonderful as the external evidence is, the internal is even yet more decisive. Unquestionably, to the mass of believers it is so. Thousands of the best and purest Christians, of whom the world knows nothing, receive it by that testimony which it bears to itself. God sends us to view the stamp

of divinity thereon. Hath He set His seal to it, and is the impress indiscernible? Was it said, even of a small part of revelation, "it is a light to the feet, and a lamp to the path", and does it shed no rays to betray its own existence? Is it "a light shining in a dark place", and yet making no discovery of itself? Is this "law of the Lord perfect, converting the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, and enlightening the eyes"; and is it recommended by no palpable features of power or wisdom, illumination or life? Is it "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword", and yet is it neither perceived, nor discerned, nor felt? The wonders of creative wisdom declare the Creator's glory; and the "firmament sheweth His handy work." Doth His word, the deliberation of His will and mercy, bear no record to the eternal Author? Hath He left us such manifestation of His providence and majesty, in the proud fabric of universal nature; such vestige of His feet in every insect that lurks among the grass, and every herb that drinks the dew; so that all creation raises a hallelujah to its Maker; and hath the word of His Son, by whom all these things were made; hath the full exhibition of his grace and love in the redemption of a ruined world, no voice but that which

human utterance lends it ? More pious is the echo of our great philosopher, “ *Nec vox hominem sonat* ”:—“ it is the voice of God, and not of man.” *

If we turn to *external* evidence, the testimony of the Church is not the sole or leading one to satisfy a sceptical mind, that the scriptures are the word of God. It neither was, nor could be, an argument of main influence against the first opposers of Christianity; and it seems to be scarcely so accounted by recent defenders of the truth. The fulfilment of Prophecy is a standing miracle: it is infallible: it is a “ more sure word ”, as St. Peter strikingly terms it, than the most unexceptionable of mortal testimony; it is more intelligible to all; more efficacious in the conversion of unbelievers; for they want not to be told, that Christians confess the Holy Bible to be the word of God: they know this already, by the agreement of all the Churches in the universe. But they require evidence, that these scriptures really are what they profess to be; to which the mere allegation of believers is not an adequate reply.

We will keep, however, to the evidence of testimony. Christians know the genuineness of the holy records, chiefly by their universal reception

* Bacon.

among all sects and in all ages. If this were wanted, the mere fiat of a solitary Church would avail nothing. The testimony of Rome, then, is but a small part of the Church's testimony; which is that of innumerable congregations, scattered through eras and places; not of a single sect speaking for the rest. She is but one among a cloud of witnesses: her seal is not required to confirm the whole; were her entire evidence expunged to-morrow, the faith would not be a whit affected by it.

The Universal Church in her congregations has been, and yet is, the depository of these lively oracles. But this testimony is not what Romanists desire. For, to disentangle ourselves from that ambiguity which they so industriously spread through all their pages, on what authority do they wish us to depend for the authenticity of Scripture?

PHILODOX.

That of the Catholic Church.

ORTHODOX.

What mean you by the Catholic Church?

PHILODOX.

The Church in communion with the See of Rome.

ORTHODOX.

Why is the testimony of this Church of more value than that of the Churches in communion with the See of Constantinople, or of Antioch? of the African or Eastern Churches? among whom the greater part of the Scriptures were first written and circulated; and to whom the most illustrious of the Fathers belonged. When the Patriarch of the former See transmitted to us the Alexandrian Manuscript of the New Testament, was it of necessity to send to Rome to have the stamp of inerrancy impressed thereon?

PHILODOX.

This kind of discussion is confined to the learned. How are the common people to be satisfied?

ORTHODOX.

Do not shift the question. I have before said, that the testimony of the Catholic Church is inexpugnable. But Rome claims an infallible fiat on the subject. Without her authority, all researches of learning are valueless; none other evidence than her own is to be heeded.

Not, however, to occupy too much time on the subject; when they speak of the testimony of the primitive Church of Rome, we allow to it all the

weight that an unimpeachable witness can require. Nay, we will carry this down for fifteen centuries, until the Council of Trent confirmed a new canon for the world. Since that time there is not a Church in Christendom whose evidence to the purity of scripture is so lightly to be accounted of as the Church of Rome ; in this, as in almost every thing else, faithless to her trust.

PHILODOX.

You speak thus from dislike to the Apocrypha.

ORTHODOX.

By no means. The apocryphal books are of great importance to the elucidation of the canonical ; they contain a fund of piety and wisdom, and much valuable historical record, mingled with no small portion of error. But in altering the canon, the present Church of Rome not only sets herself in opposition to the old Church, but to all Christian Churches : to the Church of the Apostles, the Prophets, and of Christ himself ; and herein, with that infatuation which so often blinds conspirators to their ruin, has struck a blow at the root of her infallibility. Heretics, in different ages, have tried certainly to bend the sacred volume to their corruptions : as the Unitarians, in our own

days, have laboured to make it speak a language which is as consistent with its meaning as the pages of the Koran : but the perversion is so glaring, that none can be deceived, except those who are prepared to be so. And in early times, the Ebionites rejected a great part of the scriptures. These jarring innovators have, one and all, incurred the condemnation with which St. John seals up the incorruptness of the holy record of redemption. But if we adventure to proportion iniquity, it is apparently a greater sin to add to the word of God than to detract from it. There was a time, when, to many Churches, parts of the scripture alone were known ; nor is it to be doubted, that those parts were available to salvation. But to add whole books to the rule of truth, absolutely tends to introduce all uncertainty into faith ; destroys the veracity of the testimony upon which she professes to set so high a value ; and affords a specimen of the dependence to be placed upon it, if it had stood alone. This is another fruit of infallibility : by which the word, as well as the sacraments, of God, are debased to the jurisdiction of man. She falsifies the one, and amputates the other. But if all this were not so ; if scripture rested exclusively on the witness of the Roman Church, and that remained unsullied, how does she hence derive a do-

minion over the faith of the world? How does it constitute her the unerring judge of the meaning of scripture? Suppose an atheist to be convinced by the testimony which the Natural Theology of Paley affords to the divine existence; or a Deist converted to Christianity by the volumes of Lardner. Does this constitute Dr. Paley the inerring expounder of natural religion to the one; or Dr. Lardner, of Christian doctrine to the other? Did ever mortal (except one whose senses had been steeped in the fumes of infallibility) argue that a valid testimony confers dominion and lordship over him who receives it? If the Church of Rome alone bear evidence to the truth, let it be received with respect and gratitude. But if, swelling upon this, she proceeds to throw a yoke over all the world, her bonds must be broken asunder, and her cords cast off; but the testimony of her lucid days is not, therefore, to be rejected.

PHILODOX.

I could not cease to honour a man whose incontrovertible evidence in a court of justice settled me in possession of a fine estate.

ORTHODOX.

But what if, vaunting upon this, he seizes your

house, mangles your estate at his will, debars you from the enjoyment of it, worries your tenants, carries off your title-deeds, and substitutes a mass of impositions in their stead; you would surely repel the tyranny of the man, and protect yourself from these dangerous paroxysms of pride and phrensy, although his original testimony is not affected by his subsequent misconduct.

PHILODOX.

But how is the doubting and inquiring Christian to be satisfied without a certain, infallible guide?

ORTHODOX.

He is not to be satisfied without it. There is an infallible guide in scripture. The Christian whom doubts disturb, and who is anxious to be satisfied of "the hope that is in him", ought, in the first instance, to be grateful, most grateful, to his Church, as the parent of his faith, who hath cherished this holy record for his salvation. But if he proceeds to further examination, it must be through proper evidence. Only let him take especial heed that his eye be single to the "one thing needful", his heart open to receive instruction; his prayer fervent to the Source of light; and his life conformable to those precepts, the truth and rea-

sonableness of which his moral faculty attests; remembering that "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

PHILODOX.

They will say this is not sufficient. He must have a living infallible guide in the Church to direct him.

ORTHODOX.

But surely, if a man doubts of the word of God, he doubts of the Church also. How is a suspected witness to be vindicated by one still more an object of suspicion? To allege, that the above mode is insufficient, savours of arrogance or scepticism. It is sufficient, if not to dissipate every speculative doubt, at least to secure salvation. It is sufficient, for God hath appointed none other; and to impeach the sufficiency of this, is at once to arraign His mercy and His promises.

PHILODOX.

Why then is it ineffectual?

ORTHODOX.

Why are all those other dispensations, by which "His long-suffering leadeth to repentance", ineffectual? In what consists the deficiency? in the

wisdom and goodness of God; or in the perverseness of man? “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we”: this is the Roman panacea for all ills. “We alone have an all-sufficient unfailing remedy for error; all the rest is falsehood; all guides but ours are delusive, and no guides”. Why then is not THEIR remedy effective? Why does it not preserve the world from schism? Why does it not infallibly save all who profess it? Why does it not, within its own pale, produce the genuine fruit of true religion,—holy practice? Why does not this proud pretence heal the infidelity and vice with which Romish countries abound?

PHILODOX.

Because it is not faithfully received.

ORTHODOX.

Any other Church may make the same reply, and it is for Romanists to shew why a faithful reception of the written word of God is ineffective to salvation, and a faithful reception of the unwritten effective?—The Church of England may boldly affirm, and challenge the world to the denial, that a vicious member of *her* communion acts in daring defiance of every principle, rite, and ordinance, of his religion. But, unhappily (and I speak it “more

in sorrow than in anger”), Rome has found gentler means of smoothing the sinner’s bed of death than the testimony of conscience to the divine mercy, in uprightness and holiness of life.

PHILODOX.

As we shall probably come to no conclusion, either on scripture evidence or abstract reasoning, the proper question is, whether the Church which claims infallibility actually has erred ?

ORTHODOX.

Doubtless it is. But this question their advocates are reluctant to discuss ; and therein betray the weakness of their cause. What other Church shrinks, thus sensitively, from the review of her peculiar tenets ? Not the Anglican ; she challenges her opponents to examine into each and all of her doctrines ; and rest the dispute on scripture and primitive antiquity ? What Church but Rome repels inquiry, by wrapping a cloak of inerrancy around her ? What would be said even of Christianity itself, were its defenders to check the intrusion of unhallowed feet ; and meet them with an assertion, that its divinity precludes discussion of any of its doctrines ? How then is it to be allowed, in favour of a sect, which fails to present

a single evidence in behalf of this lofty assumption? Who but a devoted disciple of their creed can be satisfied with an answer such as this? "The Church of Rome never has erred, because she cannot err." Surely, whether more accurate or not, it is, at least, more rational, to affirm, "The Church of Rome may err, for she has foully erred." The Mussulman repels all inquiry by the assertion, that Mahomet is the last prophet of God, sent to consummate revelation; and I know not how this is to be answered, but by examination of his pretensions and his doctrines. When Simon Magus claimed to himself the office of the promised Paraclete, it was by inquiry that his claims were nullified. And I see not why, in the abstract, the pretensions of any false Messiah, impostor, or fanatic, are not as valid as those of the Church of Rome. For any man may "take this honour unto himself", and appropriate all the attributes which arrogance or disordered imagination can assume; it is only by bringing them to the test, that we may divest him of his borrowed plumes.

Proceeding, therefore, to the examination of the main tenets of the Papal Church, there will be little difficulty in shewing, how slight are her claims to infallibility; how few her pretensions to the love and reverence of her followers. Bear also in mind, that if, of the arguments or evidence presented to

you, some appear not equally or fully satisfactory ; yet if but one solitary proof be established, that she has erred in doctrine,—that ONE is sufficient for the refutation of all the laboured volumes of her advocates ; and for the destruction of her dominion over the Church :—so feeble, so tottering, is the basis of the Roman rock.

PHILODOX.

I beg to decline all arguments drawn from particular doctors. The Church of Rome requires to be judged by her authorized creeds and doctrines alone.

ORTHODOX.

Be it so: we will estimate her by none other rule ; though few with less grace than Romanists can claim such a mode of discussion at our hands. Their unwearied reprobation of the Church of England is grounded on no better testimony than the inconsistencies of private divines. Their blows at her pass through the sides of individual members. Bishop Hoadly wrote *this* ; and Dr. Clarke said *that* ; Bishop Clayton was an Arian ; therefore his brethren are Unitarians. Hey and Paley qualified the Articles ; therefore, the oracle of Gibbon is true ; and all the clergy sign them “with a sigh or a smile”. Clamouring invariably against

this style of controversy, they invariably adopt it; *so invariably* that I know not a single advocate among them who has hesitated to pursue it;—perpetually calling for honourable warfare, and systematically trampling it beneath their feet. We will not be induced to tread in a course which we despise; the cause requires it not; they who would view Rome in her deformity, need but view her in her natural self. But when we see the papal champions, in their reprobation of the English Church, uniformly shrink from examining her by her authorized doctrines; her articles, liturgy, and homilies, by which she ought to be tried, “themselves being judges”; let us triumph in the palpable and obvious inference;—she stands inexpugnable by every assault which is not also levelled against the unerring records of divine truth, and the dicta of Catholic tradition, through the best and purest ages.

DIALOGUE II.

OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

PHILODOX.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION is popularly esteemed the chief point at issue between the Churches of England and Rome.

ORTHODOX.

Because so many other tenets and practices are involved in it; because it was made the test of faith to our martyred reformers and divines. Bossuet rightly remarks, that on this point the difference between Romanists and Protestants is even greater than it appears to be. But if what Archdeacon Daubeney justly terms the “newfangled doctrine” of Bishop Baines and others of the present Roman school be correct, the difference is so slight as to be perfectly imperceptible. Happy would it have been if these illuminati had appeared in councils and convocations, to shew the divines on both sides that they were bewildered when they understood transubstantiation to be the main point at issue between the contending communions; to open the eyes of Romanists to the guilt of burning

men innocent of heresy in this respect ; and to awaken Protestant prelates and confessors to the sin and absurdity of pertinaciously sacrificing their lives for no cause at all ; and to awaken popes, synods, scholiasts and theologists, heretics and orthodox, to the conviction, that they were all totally in the dark as to the real case ; for that there was nothing in fact to be disputed about—they might all cheerfully shake hands. Equally strange is it that this elucidation should have been reserved for an age—remarkable, certainly, for general knowledge—but not peculiarly eminent in enlightening the dark recesses of theology.

PHILODOX.

The Council of Trent teaches, that “ by the consecrating of the bread and wine, there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ ; and a conversion of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood ; which conversion, the Catholic Church doth, fitly and properly, call transubstantiation. And if any shall say, that, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of bread and wine do remain ; and shall deny this wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the

whole substance of the wine into the blood of Christ, the appearance of the bread and wine only remaining, which conversion the Catholic Church doth, very fitly, call transubstantiation; let him be anathema."

ORTHODOX.

The Holy Spirit hath assured us, that "as the bird by wandering, and as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come." Heedless, therefore, of the execrations of a Church whose "mouth is full of cursing", we both deny the doctrine, and abominate its results.

PHILODOX.

Most Protestant writers argue against transubstantiation on the score of its abstract impossibility. Now if there be any thing in this argument, it is in vain to appeal to testimony in its favour.

ORTHODOX.

The dispute may cheerfully be rested, where some highly respectable names would leave it; on the mere ground of evidence*. Nevertheless, in the estimation of our greatest and most pious

* Vide Mr. Faber's excellent treatise, "The Difficulties of Romanism", C. iv.

Protestant divines, this dogma brings with it consequences so importantly affecting the first principles of Christian faith, that I should shrink from my own convictions, were I to leave the abstract argument untouched. Transubstantiation implies, that our senses, legitimately employed on a proper subject, may be, and glaringly are, deceived ; so deceived as to annihilate all dependence upon them. I abhor the presumptuous application of finite faculties to decide upon the fitness and probability of infinite mysteries. But we must not forget, that scripture (and the same would hold good of tradition) was given for our learning ; for our salvation : and that we have none other medium of attaining to this learning, than by the use of our eyes or ears ; which transubstantiation affirms to be no faculty at all when directed to divine subjects. But how is the Church herself to communicate her dicta by other media ? Can any operation of sense be more simple than the apprehension of the common viands of life ? If what you see and feel, smell and taste, to be bread and wine, are not merely no bread and wine, but absolutely nothing palpable, how are you to be certain that the terms, " This is My Body ", express what the cast of the types seems to imply ? Why are you to believe the solitary sense of sight or hearing,

with disbelief of all other faculties, sensitive and intellectual? Or why, in the silent process of consecration, when nothing is heard, or seen, or felt, or tasted, are you to disbelieve both taste, and touch, and sight? If you know not that it be bread and wine after consecration, how are you to know that it is so before? How are you to know that proper viands are brought? Or, above all, how are you to know that any sacrament is consecrated, in a private operation depending upon the will and mind of another man?

PHILODOX.

Does not the objection proceed too far? Is it not presuming to limit Omnipotency. "With God all things are possible."

ORTHODOX.

It is no limitation of Almighty power, to suppose it not employed upon things which fall not under any power. "Whatsoever", says our profound Bishop Pearson, "implieth a contradiction, is impossible; and, therefore, is not within the object of the power of God, because impossibility is the contradiction of all power." Thus to say, that "God cannot lie"; cannot make things not to be, which are, or have been; is no limita-

tion of divine power, because all these imply not omnipotency, but infirmity. We are not, however, compelled to enter upon this topic. The question simply is, whether the senses, legitimately employed, acting by a sufficient medium, may be trusted? And if not, I perceive not why our discussion should be protracted.

PHILODOX.

To decide upon the substance of the Eucharist, cannot be said to be the legitimate object of sense. It is a thing, not of sight, but of faith. And in our spiritual course, “we walk by faith, not by sight.”

ORTHODOX.

The inward and spiritual grace, signified in the Eucharist, is doubtless the object of faith alone. But the outward and visible sign is the object of sense. And for no other end than this was it appointed; but that, by sensible certainty of the outward emblems, faith might feed on the certainty of the inward benefit. Religion is, indeed, a thing of faith, and faith the gift of God; yet so a gift as to be conveyed through the medium of sense. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Now the ear is as truly employed on a divine subject in hearing the word,

as the eye and lips in contemplating and receiving the Eucharist. But if the word give an uncertain sound, and the hearing may not be confided in, is not a wide and effectual door opened to all sorts of phrenetic imagination? Faith, instead of being that infallible assurance which renders it to the believer the "substance of things hoped for; and the evidence of things not seen", becomes a spiritual delirium. Our assurance in things divine rests upon the moral inerrancy of sense. We can live by none other medium in the affairs of this life. We can prepare by none other, for the blessedness of that which is to come. Grace is not given to bereave man of his faculties; but to disperse the foggy damp of original corruption; to asperge the film of sin; to preserve him from those obliquities which, unassisted, he could not but fall into.

PHILODOX.

It is answered, that the argument from sense "will not stand the test of Christian theology. The Jews, trusting to their senses, took Christ to be a carpenter's son. Hence they refused to believe that he was the Son of God. Thus Abraham, Jacob, and Joshua, thought they saw men, when really they saw angels."

ORTHODOX.

The Jews were not deceived in apprehending of Christ as man. Nor would they have been to blame in accounting him the son of Joseph, had not his wonderful works and the voice of prophecy attested the veracity of his own declarations. He called upon them, NOT to disbelieve their faculties, but to believe them ; not to distrust their senses, but to trust them ; and to draw the inference which these afforded. Their guilt consisted in refusing to believe the testimony of God, addressed to their eyes and ears. What can Romanists think of, when they virtually deny that Christ gave sufficient ocular demonstration that he was the Son of God ?

As to the appearance of angels to the Patriarchs ; it is not contended that a single sense, acting through an undue medium, may not be mistaken ; as when a stick at the bottom of a river, appears crooked ; but the other senses would rectify the mistake. The eye may mistake an angel for a man, or even a shadow for a substance ; although the conduct of Abraham, and Jacob, and Joshua, proves that they knew their visitors to be more than man. When the disciples saw Christ after his resurrection, they distrusted their sight, and thought him a disembodied spirit. Does he en-

courage this distrust? By no means. He tells them that their senses are adequate to decide upon the reality of human bodies; that though one sense may be mistaken, there are others auxiliary to it. "Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Now if transubstantiation be certain, the criterion of our Lord is uncertain; and a blow is levelled at the very root of the gospel.

PHILODOX.

In what way?

ORTHODOX.

It strikes at the identity of the man Jesus with the Son of God, which St. John grounds upon the evidence of the senses, that they had "seen, heard, looked upon, and handled, of the word of life". It strikes at the certainty of what St. Luke calls "infallible proofs" of the resurrection, which were none other than what the senses afforded. It strikes at the ascension; which took place publicly for none other end, than that the sorrowing Church might have sensitive foundation for her trust in Him who "is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour". What too means St. Luke, when he urges the authenticity of his Gospel, from the consideration, that it was derived from those who had been "eye-witnesses" of the word? Is not the

entire guilt of disbelief imputed to the Jews on this account ; that they rejected the testimony of their senses ? “ If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin.” Suppose a modern Jew to take up the Roman hypothesis, what answer would they provide for him ?

PHILODOX.

We are to recollect, it is not the natural body of our Lord, such as he had before his resurrection, that is in the Eucharist ; but his body subsequently spiritualized and glorified.

ORTHODOX.

Here seems to be a distinction without a difference ; an attempt to “ darken wisdom by words without knowledge.” It is not easy to understand how a spiritualized body can have flesh and blood as the body of Christ after the resurrection certainly had ; and the Council of Trent allows that his Eucharistic body hath. Flesh and spirit are constantly opposed in scripture. “ A spirit hath not flesh and bones”, says our Lord. A body, be it ever so highly spiritualized, must retain the essential properties of a body, or cease to exist at all. The heresy of the Docetes, which harass-

ed the primitive Church, was more consistent than this. They maintained that the body of our Lord was a phantom, and framed their creed accordingly.

II. Suppose this difficulty removed ; and that we could form the notion of our Lord's body existing as a spirit ; yet no created spirit can be, at the same instant, in many places ; though their velocity makes lightning tardy. The angel Gabriel was not in heaven when he appeared to Daniel ; but was " caused to fly swiftly " to come unto him. When the same celestial herald presented himself to the blessed Virgin, he " was *sent from God* unto a city of Gallilee ". In their guardianship of men, these holy spirits " are *sent forth* to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ". The Fathers argue for the divinity of the Holy Spirit, from his ubiquity as peculiar to God alone ; communicable to no created spirit or being, such as are the human body and soul of Christ, who " was made in all points like as we are ", sin excepted ; and unless humanity be capable of ubiquity, the incarnate nature of the Son of God is alike incapable.

But, to reduce this to a point ; can the consecrating priests do more in the sacrament than our Lord did ?

PHILODOX.

Assuredly not. All rests upon His institution.

“DO THIS, as I have done.” The whole priesthood consists herein. What he sacrificed, they sacrifice. What he converted, they convert.

ORTHODOX.

Then how vain is the pretence they urge ! Our Lord, when he made the Apostles priests ; when he consecrated the elements ; was in his *natural* state ; in that flesh and blood of the sons of men, which he mercifully assumed for their salvation ; his body was not then spiritualized. Therefore into the material compound of humanity are the elements converted, or not at all ; because not as the first conversion must have been. If then our Lord turned the incarnate vessel which veiled his glory into the shape of bread and wine ; if he held himself in his hand ; brake his own sacred body ; ate it entirely ; gave it entire to each and all of the eleven to eat ; poured out his own blood ; drank himself again ; gave himself wholly again for the rest to drink ;—then may they do this also. If not, what is transubstantiation ? Ask yourself the question ; and “ commune with your own heart ” upon it.

The merciful Redeemer of his Church hath, in no case, left her destitute of a sufficient criterion of truth and falsehood, for those who, in depend-

ence on his word and grace, apply it. The Roman creed proclaims, that He who is in the Eucharist is the sacred self of Him who died on the cross, and rose again. Now of the verity of this, he hath given a test; "Handle me and see." If there be "flesh and blood", it is He that is risen again. Nay if it be his "body of glory", there the glory is. But if there be no manifestation; neither sight; nor sound: nor touch; then it is not the glorified offspring of Mary's womb; it is not He whom "the heavens have received until the consummation of all things". Therefore, when they lift their idol up on high; "Lo, here is Christ; or there; Believe them not." Worship it not. —When they say, "Behold, he is in the secret places"; He is come under the veil of the elements; in the secrecy of the host! "Go not forth! For as the lightning shineth from the east unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

PHILODOX.

They affirm, however, that the doctrine always was explained in this spiritual sense. Indeed, they do not pretend to the gross actual manducation of flesh and blood.

ORTHODOX.

Then they eat not that very Christ who rose

from the dead. Then they eat not what their infallible Church commands, "flesh and blood."

Neither was the tenet "always explained" spiritually. The gross meaning was the intended meaning of those who first enforced this dogma. The earliest confession of faith in transubstantiation is the following; which was solemnly, and with great deliberation, prepared by Pope Nicholas I. and the Council of Rome, and enforced upon Berengar: "I profess, with mouth and heart, to hold that faith of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which the venerable Lord and Pope Nicholas, and this Holy Synod hath delivered, to be held, &c. namely, that the bread and wine which are placed on the altar, are, after consecration, not only the sacrament, but also the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and are, sensually, not only in sacrament, but in truth, handled and broken by the hands of the priests, and bruised by the teeth of the faithful."* Such is the be-

* "*Ore et corde profiteor de sacramentis Dominicæ Mensæ, eam fidem tenere, quam D. et V. P. Nicolaus et hæc S. Synodus tenendam tradidit,—scil. panem et vinum quæ in altari ponuntur, post consecrationem, non solum sacramentum, sed etiam verum corpus et sanguinem D. N. J. Christi esse, et sensualiter, non solum sacramento, sed in veritate, manibus sacerdotum tractari, frangi, et fidelium dentibus atteri.*" Gratian. de Cons. Dist. 2. c. 42., quoted in Hopkins' "Bertram."

lief of those who first sanctioned the doctrine ; such the earliest and decisive fiat of Rome on the subject. Such also is the popular belief ; and, however shocking, the only intelligible one. If the reflective mind of any of their advocates shrinks from this, it shrinks from what their supreme tribunal, dogmatically, and ex cathedra, defined.

PHILODOX.

But is there not this flaw in the whole of your objections,—that you are reasoning from nature to rebut that which is above, or anomalous to nature ? Transubstantiation is a miracle. What know we of miracles ?

ORTHODOX.

Surely, thus much we know. That, so far from being contrary or inevident to sense, their end and utility consist in their being addressed to sense ; and depend on the infallibility of sensitive perceptions. They are exhibited to convince the intellect of something which, without supernatural evidence, would scarcely be accredited. The early annals of Transubstantiation may illustrate this. Why are so many marvels alleged by Paschasius and the rest to recommend this tenet, but that the senses might have evidence to satisfy them in contradicting themselves ?

PHILODOX.

Romanists draw a parallel between the Eucharistic change and the change of water into wine by our Lord.

ORTHODOX.

But were not the senses here the judge? The discolouration of the element declared the conversion to the eye; the excellency of the liquor to the palate; and it was by this sensual evidence that our Lord “manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.” It is needless to shew how, in every respect, the cases differ.

PHILODOX.

I find their writers make a distinction in miracles. Some are evident to sense: others are not evident to sense: of which latter kind is the Eucharistic conversion.

ORTHODOX.

Nay, this is of neither kind. They must, therefore, invent a third; and prove that there may be miracles evident to sense; miracles not evident to sense; and miracles contrary to sense. Produce an example of the latter kind; and shew where the Almighty hath miraculously suspended the laws of nature, to contradict or deceive those faculties, which are the sole medium He hath vouchsafed us, to dis-

tinguish right from wrong, truth from falsehood, certainty from delusion? These faculties are sufficiently infallible to preserve from important error every upright mind in the affairs of life: how much more necessary is it for us to be secure of the evidence they bring in the business of eternity!

There is not a single miracle in the scriptures, of the reality of which there was not sensible demonstration. St. Paul, speaking of the miraculous gift of tongues, says, they were given "*for a sign*, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not"; which remark, whilst it implies that miracles are intended for unbelievers, and that believers are to depend upon something else, asserts also, that they are, in their nature, evident signs to convince unbelievers; and where there is no sign, there is no miracle: unbelievers were to be convinced of what they heard, by what they saw.

PHILODOX.

But if there be no miracle, but that of which there is sensible demonstration, you deny that the Incarnation is a miracle.

ORTHODOX.

The Incarnation had but one immediate subject—the Blessed Virgin; and surely to her there

was demonstration. A miracle can be known only by its sensible effects on its proper object. To other believers, the reality of the Incarnation was attested by other miraculous testimony.

PHILODOX.

But what mean we by a miracle? The common definition of it is, "a violation, or suspension, or counteraction of the laws of nature."

ORTHODOX.

But you must not lose sight of the etymology of the word:—"MIRACLE; a wonder, a thing declared to be above the power of nature, by its astonishing effects." Though every wonder be not a miracle (as the laws of nature themselves are wonderful, not miraculous), yet every miracle is a wonder. Where there is no wonder, there is no miracle. Transubstantiation is, in every wise, a thing *sui generis*: it is a wonder with nothing wonderful; a miracle with nothing miraculous.

PHILODOX.

After all, though senses do not err in their testimony of their proper objects, yet they may err in substances, which are not the objects of sense, but the accidents only; as colour, figure, &c.

ORTHODOX.

If this were true, it is no reply to the objection. It may serve to bewilder the subject; but it clears not the difficulty. For it will follow, that we can judge of no substance in the world by our senses; that we live in a universe of delusion; and he who swears to the identity of man or beast, house or land, runs the risk of perjury. There is in fact an end to all civil and religious converse.—The faculties which God hath given to discern accidents were given to discern substances thereby. Either they are sufficient for this, or they are not. If they are sufficient, transubstantiation is false. If they are not sufficient, there is an end of all argument upon this or any other topic. The hypothesis annihilates evidence. What need of disputation when we have no faculty competent to decide?

It is painful to reply to this Pagan mode of stifling and entangling the most interesting ordinance of Christianity; designed to bring home the faith to popular and simple minds. Is it becoming, to reduce practical theology to the dark jargon of scholastic quibbling? Search the scriptures; turn over the volumes of primitive divinity, and see whether any of this false philosophy is to be met with on the subject. No, it is of much later origin; introduced into the schools expressly

to dress up this unsightly prodigy. St. Paul forewarned his disciples against suffering the word of God to be corrupted by such reveries: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, and not after Christ." He commands his bishops to keep the "sacred deposit committed to their trust", in the plain scriptural simplicity of edification, "avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."

Nothing but the solemnity of religion, even in its most perverted state, preserves this dogma and its appendages from ridicule and contempt. Perhaps you may remember the smart repartee of a physician of the Romish communion, who, when pressed with the insuperable absurdities of this apology, frankly exclaimed, that he thought "the Fathers of Trent ought to have been condemned to feed on accidents of bread alone all their lives, for bringing so great an incumbrance on the faith."*

Proceeding, however, from these objections, to the consideration of evidence, what is the basis that sustains this ponderous superstructure?

PHILODOX.

When Christ "multiplied the five loaves and

* Harris, on Transubstantiation, in the Salter's Hall Sermons.

two fishes, so as to afford a superabundant meal to five thousand men, besides women and children (an evident sign of his future multiplication of his own person on the altars of the world), he took occasion to speak of this mystery, by saying, 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. And the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' The Jews, being perplexed, by understanding Christ's words in the plain natural sense, he, so far from removing it by a different explanation, confirms it, by expressing that sense in terms more emphatical. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, 'how can this man give us his flesh to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'Verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' Not merely the multitude, but some of his beloved disciples took offence at this mystery of a real corporal presence; whom he certainly would not have permitted to desert him, if he could have removed the difficulty by barely telling them, that they were only to receive him by faith, and to take bread and wine in remembrance of him."*

* Milner's *End of Controversy*, B. xxxvii.

ORTHODOX.

That the multiplication of the loaves and fishes was an emblem of his all-sufficiency to feed the souls of his people with spiritual nourishment, may be admitted; and his disciples could so have received it. That it was an emblem of the "future multiplication of his body on the altars of the world", rests solely upon the certainty of the point contested; and whether true or otherwise, the disciples could not then, at least, have thus understood it. That the Jews apprehended him in the strict literal sense, is true, nor could they well have been offended had they not so apprehended. But the metaphorical sense was the obvious sense, as well from the known phraseology of their sacred writers, as because the literal sense was barbarous and unnatural, "seeming", says St. Augustine, "to command a crime, and therefore to be figuratively understood." To receive the instruction of a teacher, was, in scriptural idiom, to eat and drink his doctrine. For instance, when Solomon invites mankind to receive the truths of divine knowledge, his language is, "Wisdom hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath furnished her table,—Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." He does not here invite the seekers of wisdom to a carnal repast of

flesh and wine ; but to an intellectual banquet of spiritual nourishment. It was therefore a gross example of perverse stupidity when the Jews understood Christ, not figuratively, as using a diction familiar to their inspired teachers ; but literally, for which they had no precedent, and against which nature and decency revolted. That some of his disciples also took offence at his words, is true ; but that these disciples were none other than mere followers, devoid of sincere faith, is clear from his own expressions. “ There are some of you that believe not.” But that he left them in uncorrected error, is not the fact. He tells them, that the carnal apprehension of his words is not the true one ; and that if it were, they would have no benefit therefrom. “ It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing” : my flesh could benefit you nothing, were ye to eat it. “ The words that I speak unto you” : the doctrine I preach : “ they are spirit and they are life.”

The objections to the literal reception of the text, are palpable. Christ, we have seen, reprehends this meaning. He says moreover, “ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Now if this be true in the literal sense, then none can be saved without it. “ Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood

hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The eating and drinking, then, which he speaks of is peculiar to sincere Christians, giving them a part in his glorious resurrection; therefore, it is not carnal eating and drinking. We do not wonder that Bishop Milner should carefully omit these passages, when he pretends to examine our Lord's discourse.

Finally, if the literal eating and drinking of Christ is here commanded, the Jews could scarcely be blamed for not understanding a doctrine so abruptly and unconnectedly stated. But they *were* blamed for not understanding him, and were therefore capable of doing so. Now, they had inspired authority for receiving it in the symbolical sense; but none, save their own carnality, for accepting it literally.

PHILODOX.

Yet in this sense, it appears to have been understood by all the Fathers.

ORTHODOX.

Certainly not. The greatest of the Fathers receive it in the metaphorical sense, and argue against the literal. The following is the gloss of Origen: "There is also in the New Testament a letter, which killeth him who does not understand spiri-

tually what is spoken. For if you follow *according to the letter*, that same saying, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, &c., this letter killeth". And thus says Augustin, whom I have just before referred to: "To believe in him, this is to eat the living bread. Whoever believeth in him, eateth. He is invisibly fed, because he is invisibly regenerated. Where he is renewed, there is he nourished."*

PHILODOX.

At any rate, the words of consecration appear decisive. "This is my body." What but intentional perversion can turn this language of Christ from its obvious sense?

ORTHODOX.

The literal is not always the obvious sense of a passage. If a man points to houses or land, and says, "this is my estate", then the literal is the obvious meaning, and the intellect extends not beyond the mere terms uttered. But if he should point to a parchment in his hand, and say, "this is my estate", then the literal is not the obvious sense; the mind immediately apprehends a figure; and he who should understand it literally would not need to furnish much stronger proof of mental aberration. Thus when we read, "I am the vine";

* Usher, p. 34.

“ That rock was Christ”; “ We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones”; “ This is the Lord’s passover”; “ This is my body”, &c. the obvious sense is not, that Christ is a vine-tree, or a mass of stone ; that we are hands and legs of his self-same flesh and bones ; that the lamb was the passover, or bread his body : a metaphor is immediately understood.

Transport yourself, for a moment, to that sacred chamber of our Lord, where, supper being ended, fresh loaves of unleavened bread and cups of wine were placed on the table before them. One of these pieces of bread he takes in his righteous hand ; blesses it ; breaks it ; gives it among his disciples, with these words, “ This is my body broken for you.”—Imagine yourself an auditor and spectator there. Could you have understood, that by those simple words the Lord ceased to be on the couch where your eyes beheld him ; that he was transformed into the bit of bread which he apparently held in his hand ; that the viand which you still saw was no longer bread, but the real body of him who seemed to be before you ; that your faculties were instantly annihilated, and all in your presence delusion ; that each person present was to eat up his Lord ; and that the same process was afterwards to be pursued with respect to the wine ?

Surely nothing but the most unaccountable grossness can enter into such an hypothesis.

“ This is my body broken for¹ you.” What is his broken body? What could you suppose him to mark by the demonstrative **THIS**, except the bread which he held in his hand? It was not then vanished. Their presumed conversion takes not place till the last syllable of **BODY** be uttered. But **THIS** signifies somewhat before extant; even bread.

PHILODOX.

No; all affirm, with Bellarmin, that it is impossible bread should be substantially the body of Christ.

ORTHODOX.

But can any thing than the most amazing perversion of sense and language understand it otherwise? “ He took bread.” What he took, he blessed; even bread. What he blessed, he brake; even bread. What he brake, he gave; even bread. And of that which he took, blessed, brake, and gave, He said, “ This is my body”; even bread.

The argument here might securely rest in an impregnable fortress. Bread was the body of Christ. Substantially, all admit, it could not be; sacramentally, all allow, it **COULD** be.—In constituting the prototype of the Eucharist, the paschal lamb,

Moses said, "This is the Lord's passover". Substantially, the lamb neither was, nor could be, the passover of the Lord; sacramentally, it was. Of the initiatory Hebrew sacrament, circumcision, the analogy holds good. "This is my covenant", saith God; not his actual, but sacramental, covenant; adding, "This shall be a *token* of my covenant."*

PHILODOX.

Yes; but here the terms are explained to be a figure; not so in the Eucharist. Where a metaphor is used, some adjunct language is found to explain it.

ORTHODOX.

Neither invariably, nor commonly. The value of a metaphor rests in its force of illustration; in its power to enlighten and impress the subject. Hence scripture metaphors are in general so obvious, that a child may know a figure to be used; although the strict interpretation may not be always apparent. We might imagine, that no language could be more obviously symbolical than that of our Lord, which can scarcely be said to be unexplained, even by himself. He used not the four words only which Romanists maintain to have pro-

* Gen. xvii

duced the conversion, "This is my body"; but "This is my body broken for you". Therefore it was not his natural body; whole, unsuffering, as at the moment he spake.

PHILODOX.

But is it not strange, that, subsequently, the Apostles should give no explanation to save the Church from so grievous an error?

ORTHODOX.

If this was the fact, it could scarcely be deemed strange; inasmuch as the natural use of the sensitive and reasoning faculties is no object of revelation, by which it is presupposed. But the Apostles did give an explanation. St. Paul wrote an epistle expressly to regulate, among other things, the administration of this sacrament. He declares, that he had received the institution from the Lord; and what he received, he there delivers. Now what does he call the consecrated element every time he speaks of it? BREAD. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" But bread cannot be literally the body of Christ. It is substantially bread; and sacramentally, the communion of the body of Christ.

PHILODOX.

But does not St. Paul say, "Whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"; and "eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body"? Now, if the body and blood be not actually there, how can a man profane them? and if the body be not there, how can it be discerned?

ORTHODOX.

As well may it be argued that he who injures the Church, which is also "the body of Christ", does not injure the body of Christ, because the body is not actually there. Does not St. Paul say "that sinners crucify the Son of God afresh"? and as well may you contradict the Apostle, by alleging, that "they cannot crucify the Son of God", because they have him not to crucify. Dr. Milner, arguing for the veneration of images, brings the example of St. Stephen of Auxerre, "who, unable to make the Emperor Copronymus conceive the nature of relative honour and dishonour, threw a piece of money, bearing the Emperor's figure, on the ground, and treated it with the utmost indignity; when the latter soon proved, by his treatment of the Saint, that the indignity regarded himself, rather than the piece of metal." He who profanes

and insults the monarch's seal, insults not the seal, but him whose seal it is. He who profanes the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, profanes that body and blood whose sacrament it is. As to the expression "discerning", if it be taken literally, they no more "discern" the body than ourselves.

PHILODOX.

Of the transubstantiation of the wine, you have said nothing. But this is equally an article of faith.

ORTHODOX.

It is equally an article of faith, but not with like frequency brought forward. For the difficulty in this is even greater than in the other, and still more forcibly exhibits the absurdity of the literal interpretation.

In the narratives of the Evangelists, we read, that our Lord commanded, "Drink ye all of it; and they all drank of it." Now what they all drank was wine; for it was not then consecrated, according to the Romish hypothesis, which rests the consecration on the words, "This is my blood". And after consecration, it continued the same; for he saith, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

PHILODOX.

There is some variation in the form of words among the different sacred writers.

ORTHODOX.

And this may suffice to shew, that they knew nothing of any physical change to be effected by the use of two or three set terms. If we might suppose the words to be closely observed by one, more than another, it would be St. Paul; who mentions the subject, not incidentally, as the others; but expressly discourses upon it, as “he had received it from the Lord”. Now he says, the words were, “This cup is the new testament in My blood”; therefore, if there be any transubstantiation, it is of the cup, not of the wine, into the blood of Christ. And as he expressly interprets **THIS**, when spoken by our Lord, to signify this cup: by analogy, we are compelled to conclude that the former **THIS** is **THIS BREAD**.

PHILODOX.

It is, I suppose, the force of such objections which induced Scotus to remark, that, “without the declaration of the Church, there is no express place of scripture, which compels us to admit transubstantiation.” And Bellarmin allows, that this is not improbable *.

* De Euch. L. III. c. 23.

ORTHODOX.

What a prodigy then is it, that such unchristian shackles should be cast upon men, to rob reason of its legitimate powers, language of its most familiar idioms, and scripture of its analogy; to introduce an idolatrous and superstitious service; and pervert the symbols of a Saviour's love into a test for sending thousands of the best and holiest of his people to a horrid death, merely to support a monstrous dogma, grounded upon the dismembered portions of a metaphor, and upon the declamatory diction of rhetorical eloquence; fabricated in the darkest and most wicked era of Christian history, and enforced by direful and incessant persecution!

PHILODOX.

The Protestant Churches hold the doctrine of a real presence of Christ in the sacrament, which seems liable to the same difficulties; and, in fact, Roman writers commonly use that phrase.

ORTHODOX.

Certainly they do; because it is an ambiguous phrase, and may mean physical conversion, or not. Transubstantiation, as the Council of Trent says, is the fit and proper designation of their tenet.

That Christ, by His divinity, is really present in

every part of the creation, all who confess that divinity, una voce, exclaim : that He is peculiarly present in the devotions of his faithful people, we have His own gracious assurance ; that He is most especially present, at the celebration of this commemorative sacrifice, the language of its institution urges us to believe. But that His body is locally separated from this world for ever, until His second advent, the unerring records of His word declare. It may, indeed, be said to be *mystically* present in the Sacrament; since to the believer are therein secured all the benefits of His Incarnation, as fully as though He were personally with him. “ The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? ”

PHILODOX.

Their translation renders it “ communication.”

ORTHODOX.

Be it so. As then κοινωνία, “ the communication of the Holy Ghost”, means the communication to believers of all his benefits, which flow from the “ love of God”, in and by “ the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”; so the communication of his body broken, and of his blood poured out, is the communicating to the same of all those blessings which that amazing sacrifice of incomprehensible

mercy hath procured. And the term, here used, does generally signify in scripture, either communication of benefits from, or participation with, another.

PHILODOX.

But how is this to be reconciled with the opinion of your Church, that the Eucharist "is a mere sign or figure"?

ORTHODOX.

You have so far read the writings of Romanists, it seems, as to imbibe a portion of their inconsistency or unfairness. At one moment we are told, that there is no essential difference between our tenet and theirs, both believing a real presence: at another, we are accused of holding nothing better than an empty sign or figure. Both of these notions the Church of England disclaims.

PHILODOX.

Yet Bishop Hoadly, and others of your divines, have taught the latter.

ORTHODOX.

It is wonderful that respectable Romanists should not blush at this mode of attack. It is like a tottering cause, catching a prop from every quarter. Why else do they pursue a mode of warfare,

against the justice of which, when turned upon themselves, they raise such outcries? What is to us the opinion of a solitary prelate or divine? Why do they systematically shun the investigation of our creeds and formulas? except that they have long since discovered the Church of England unassailable by any weapons which would not be alike fatal to the primitive faith. Certainly, she renounces and abhors the notion, that she can impart her Redeemer's natural body and blood into the mouth and stomach of whom she will; but she is also far from regarding the sacramental elements to be a mere empty sign. She esteems them to be to the sincere recipient, the real and very communication of all the benefits of the Saviour's death and passion. To repeat that trite simile;—the title-deed of an estate is not a vague parchment, nor an empty sign; but it is both the actual conveyance to the true owner of his real estate, and “a pledge to assure him thereof”.

PHILODOX.

But it seems an evident contradiction to say, you receive that in the sacrament which does not exist in the sacrament. It is like the speech of a debtor, who should say to his creditor, “I hereby verily and indeed pay you the money I owe you;

but I have not verily and indeed wherewith to pay you."*

ORTHODOX.

I presume, if a debtor had got bills of the national bank to the amount of his debt, he would have no great reason to fear the face of his creditor, though he chanced not to possess the hard coin of the realm. The Church as truly conveys to the faithful recipient the benefits of Christ's body and blood, as he who surrenders a title-deed, or gives seisin by turf and water, invests a man with possession of an estate. She acts differently from the Roman Church. She does not say, "I verily give you the entire sacrament"; but "I verily and indeed keep half to myself." She does not give a clipped coin; professing, at the same time, that it is verily and indeed a sterling guinea.

What the sun is to our natural system, Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, is to the spiritual system. We need not the bodily presence of the one to feel his rays, or be nurtured by his beams; neither does the Church, sustained by the grace and goodness of the eternal Godhead, require, for her nourishment and support, the actual presence of his human body.

* End of Controversy, L. xxxviii.

PHILODOX.

How came the carnal presence to abound in the writings of the Fathers, which are filled with passages admitting of no other solution ?

ORTHODOX.

The case is not so. The Fathers speak in most exalted terms of the Eucharist, doubtless. They give to the sign the name of the thing signified. They speak of an elemental change, conversion, &c. But they also declare, that the elements, nevertheless, remain in their nature : that though the use was altered, the substance was not : that the conversion is not physical, but moral ; such as takes place by the consecration of the baptismal water, of a temple, of a layman to the priesthood, &c. Vain, therefore, is it to accumulate passages from the Fathers to prove what no one calls in question. Let them produce a single orthodox writer, in the primitive centuries, who maintained a physical change.

PHILODOX.

Among the Fathers, as St. Augustin was especially denominated the "teacher of grace", so was St. Chrysostom termed "the teacher of the Sacraments." Few are more entitled to authority in the early ages of Christianity, than this eloquent Father.

I believe Romanists would be content to rest the dispute upon his single testimony : so incessantly does he inculcate the real conversion.

ORTHODOX.

They may safely admit, that if St. Chrysostom cannot establish the carnal doctrine, it is vain to look elsewhere ; for no one speaks of the Eucharist in language more lofty and hyperbolical. Hence, in the disputation at Oxford, when the Reformers denied the corporal presence, their opponents constantly pressed them with testimonies, strong and plausible, certainly, from his writings. But when this eloquent orator descends, from the brilliant flights which pervade his sermons, homilies, &c. to bridle his fancy in calm discussion, his language is far more bounded. And it is in deliberate statement of doctrine that we are to judge of a theologian ; not in his declamations, designed to rouse and influence the affections.

There was one Cesarius, who had fallen into the Apollinarian heresy ; which differed in words only from the Eutychian, both admitting but one nature in Christ : the latter converting the Godhead into flesh ; the former converting the human nature into God. To reduce this seceder from his error, St. Chrysostom wrote an epistle to him, in which he

argues, that as, although “the bread is thought worthy to be called the body of the Lord,” yet the *nature* of bread remaineth; and as the bread is *not* converted into the body of Christ, &c. so neither is the flesh of Christ converted into the Godhead. An argument more fatal to the Roman cause, more truly Protestant, cannot be met with.

PHILODOX.

Does not this epistle to Cesarius lie under some doubt?

ORTHODOX.

As much doubt as the unfair dealing of their doctors could superinduce. The epistle, having been long buried (except as to a few quotations found in other writings), was brought to light by Peter Martyr, in a conference with Bishop Gardiner, who attempted to escape the consequence, by maintaining that it was the production of some other than Chrysostom. Feeling, however, that this was no reply, inasmuch as its authenticity could be proved by incontrovertible testimony; and even if not the genuine work of this Patriarch, it was at least of the same age, and the writing of a zealous Catholic, arguing against heresy from the admitted doctrine of the Church;—this vulpine Prelate boldly insisted, that although Chrysostom says the *nature*

of bread is not changed, yet he means that the *substance* is changed, and the accidents alone remain ; and such is the common reply of their divines ; which renders this Father a very intelligible and conclusive reasoner indeed. Truly, Cesarius must be an obstinate heretic, not to be convinced by such an argument as the following :—“ The bread is worthy to be called the body of Christ, inasmuch as although the nature remains, and is not converted into his real body, yet the nature doth not remain, but the accidents only, by actual corporal conversion.”—His similitude too is as lucid as his logic :—“ As the nature of bread is essentially changed into the body of Christ, so the human nature is NOT essentially changed into the divine.”

We need not, therefore, wonder that Cardinal Perron, ashamed of such an explanation as this, renewed the denial of the epistle, and refused to acknowledge its authenticity. But unfortunately, this decision was annulled by a learned member of their communion, M. Bigot, who found the original epistle in the Dominican monastery of St. Mark, at Florence ; and being about to publish an edition of Palladius, he annexed a copy to that work, which appeared in 1680. No sooner, however, was it inspected by the doctors of the Sorbonne, than they prohibited the publication of the

book, until the leaves containing the epistle had been cut out ; which leaves, so cut out, fell into the hands of Archbishop Wake *.—Learn to estimate the worth of testimony by the treatment it receives at Romish hands. Value the sincerity of their reverence for antiquity, by the abstractions, interpolations, and corruptions which the Fathers have sustained from them. Dr. James's " Treatise " on this topic is well worthy of perusal ; and subsequent discoveries would give extensive amplification to its pages.

PHILODOX.

An evidence more satisfactory than that of individual Fathers would be that of the ancient Liturgies of the Church. Now though I pretend not that these formulas, called after St. Clement, St. James, St. Mark, &c. were the genuine productions of those whose names they bear ; yet their antiquity, far higher than the era assigned to the rise of transubstantiation, and their customary use in Churches, renders their doctrine very important to our question. Of these, the Roman Missal is accounted the purest, and the model of the rest.

ORTHODOX.

That cannot be the model, which is of the later

* Defence of Exposition, App.

origin. If any liturgy may pretend to be the "model of the rest", it is that imputed to St. Clement; and which is, most probably, the earliest liturgy of the Church: its construction and composition are very primitive; and the mode of administering the Eucharist strictly harmonizes with the account given in the second century by Justin Martyr. Perhaps every part of this liturgy may be vindicated by Ante-Nicene evidence.

The Roman Missal is far inferior in antiquity and worth. It is of comparatively recent date; and of less authority than any other of the old liturgies; whose place, however, by papal control, it has usurped in the Latin Churches. That single supplication, "through the merits of the saints", is a decisive mark either of novelty or interpolation. The ancient services have nothing of the kind.

PHILODOX.

It is, however, prior to the era assigned by Protestants to the origin of transubstantiation.

ORTHODOX.

So you may infer without going further than the Missal itself. The prayer used after consecration is irreconcilable with this doctrine. The priest, for instance, elevates the host, the real body

of his Lord ; and implores God “ to look propitiously with a serene countenance upon *these gifts*, and accept them as He accepted those of Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, and the immaculate host of his high-priest Melchizedek ; and that He would command *these things* to be carried, by the hands of his angel unto his high altar, in the presence of his divine Majesty.” Is it other than a gross indignity to our ever blessed Lord, for a corrupt mortal to intercede for him, and pray God to look as graciously and propitiously upon the sacrifice of his own well-beloved and eternal Son, as he had looked upon the offerings of the Patriarchs ? whereas, through His merits alone were the offerings of those holy men at all acceptable.

PHILODOX.

Cardinal Bona gives this explanation of these difficult words ;—“ We pray for the propitious countenance of God upon our gifts ; lest perchance, on account of our iniquities, they should not be grateful unto God ; though otherwise, on the part of the thing offered, and on the part of the primary offerer, who is Christ, they are always pleasing unto Him.” *

* De Lit. p. 781.

ORTHODOX.

This explanation confirms what the words, under the present doctrine, convey ; viz. that the sacrifice of the Messiah is not more the gift of God to man, than of man to God ; and that the sins of mortals are capable of rendering the offering of the Son of God unacceptable to the Father, and of diminishing in the divine eye the value of that glorious sacrifice.

Again, is it rational or decent to pray, that Christ may be presented by an angel in heaven ; where He ever liveth and reigneth with the Father, in the unity of the Spirit, one God, blessed for ever : amen ? According to what we doubt not was the mind of the compiler of this prayer, the language is pious and proper ; and the reference to the sacrifices of the Patriarchs fit and edifying. But in the lips of a transubstantiating priest, it is as nonsensical, as it is irreverent, not to say impious.

PHILODOX.

This objection apart, the general consistency of so ancient a liturgy, with the doctrine of the corporal presence, militates against its recent invention.

ORTHODOX.

The consistency is apparent, not real ; and is not

to be found in the words used ; which are unheard, or buried in a strange language. For, in fact, the terms of the Canon are plain and simple. The seeming consistency is in the rubrics, which were framed to support transubstantiation ; and they are superstitious and offensive in the extreme. The crossings and bowings ; kissings and kneelings ; looking up and then down ; now extending the hands, and now joining them together, &c. with the elevation, adoration, and all the other appendages ; do present one of the most palpable appearances of idolatry, of worshipping the creature instead of the Creator, that, probably, the universe at this day exhibits.

PHILODOX.

After all, how is the alleged novelty of transubstantiation reconcileable with its prevalence ? When and where did it spring up ? Who was its author ? How came all the Church to receive it ?

ORTHODOX.

Let me answer these questions by another. Why are not such queries as valid in the mouth of a Pagan, as of a Romanist ? Why could not the Jews have put them to Christ and His Apostles, when denouncing their corrupt traditions ? The reply of our Lord disperses this sophistry into air : “ From

the beginning it was not so." Were all your inquiries unanswerable by us, they weigh not a feather against the invincible fact, that for centuries after the Christian era the dogma was unknown. As, however, this mode of questioning is very popular with them, we will not leave it unfurnished with a solution.

The earliest glimpse of transubstantiation appeared in the Eutychians of the fifth century, when it was authoritatively condemned by Pope Gelasius. Nurtured in the den of heresy, it crawled forth again in the deep gloom of the ninth age, and shewed its unsightly features in the Church. Though encountering many hard rebuffs, it gradually expanded, and matured during the increasing darkness of the following centuries, when, as their own writers record, the spiritual head of the Church seemed to be either driven away by the corruptions of the people, or to have fallen asleep at the helm, and left his ship to the mercy of the waves; when her carnal head, (carnal indeed!) was a series of monsters, from whose crimes we shrink with disgust; when prelates and clergy were immersed in incredible and enormous vices; when, deeply as at the period of which the prophet speaks, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." This was an era, duly prepared, by intellectual and

spiritual gloom, for the reception of any prodigy: since no power less than that of her Divine Founder preserved the vessel from a total wreck, tossed as she was on the billows of Mahometan and Pagan desolation, and sinking under the pressure of internal corruption. For in the west, the rude swarms of the northern hive; and, in the east, the hordes of Turks and Saracens, devastated the seats of religion and of literature; and made havoc of all learning, human and divine:—whilst in the Church the treacherous tyranny of her rulers and their satellites debased the purity of primitive record; and exchanged the piety of early days for a mass of imposture and fraud, which long rendered history doubtful, and still obscures the integrity of evidence; when decretal epistles and other forgeries usurped the place of holy writ; when legendary romance passed for more than gospel verity; when miracles the most absurd and scandalous were fabricated by knavish monks to give currency to new doctrines issuing from the same inventive source;—when patriarchs and prelates were occupied in riding on the necks of princes, of people, and of each other; when pontiffs tore pontiffs from their graves; when popelings (it is the contemptuous epithet of Platina) did little else than annul and anathematize the measures of their predecessors; and councils were

but convened to execrate and persecute councils. Such was the auspicious hour in which the eternal foe of Christian truth dragged forth, from the cave of heresy, this tenet, to ride in triumph through the Church; to be the founder of the inquisition; the parent of persecution; and to convert the emblem and seal of redeeming mercy, into the most deadly instrument of remorseless cruelty. This was the period in which transubstantiation obtained its victory. In such an era, the more monstrous a thing was, the more eagerly it was followed.—Now it is through the dark and almost inextricable avenues of this dreary epoch; through the mazes of its forgeries, the labyrinths of its marvels, the recesses of its crimes, and the camp of its tumults and seditions, we are required to wade: and for what purpose? To prove that day is not night; that falsehood cannot be truth; that the senses may be trusted in their lawful exercise; that the testimony of holy writ, of primitive martyrs, of orthodox Fathers, of early traditions, is rather to be believed, than a dogma which defies the whole; against which reason and scripture revolt, and whose very basis is the nullity of all testimony.

PHILODOX.

Dark as was the period to which you refer, and

in which the annals, as well of Baronius, Platina, and, in fact, all competent writers, unhappily, hold you out; yet it must not be forgotten that there were many great and good men, who still bore testimony to the truth.

ORTHODOX.

Undoubtedly there were. God hath never left Himself without a witness. And although, the “still small voice” was scarcely heard, in the surrounding din, there is still testimony to lend a clue to the inquiry.

The destructive fact, that in the fifth century, the doctrine of a corporeal change in the elements, was promulged by the Eutychian heretics; that it was then denounced and condemned, would be sufficient to shew that the opinion was heretical in that age. And upon this simple fact again, the whole might be allowed to rest. That which was then heresy, were it universally prevalent for every century since, can never be transubstantiated into orthodoxy. The doctrinal sentence of Pope Gelasius was, “*The substance of the nature of bread and wine does not cease to exist*”: and in this sentence, the whole Church acquiesced. But a pontiff, who should now pronounce such sentence, would

by that very act become a Protestant, and tear up the foundations of his Church.

For the space of six hundred years, then, it had been the uniform practice of the Church, to speak of the Eucharist as the sacrament, type, anti-type, symbol, figure, similitude, representation, &c. of the body and blood of Christ: the change produced by consecration was declared to be sacramental and moral; and denied to be physical and substantial. That which is now faith, was then heresy.

In the seventh century, the Eutychian notion, which, though condemned, had not been extinguished, appears to have affected the speculative cranium of one Anastasius, a monk of Mount Sinai*; and as the philosophers had been the teachers of heresy in the primitive days; so, in a later period, the monks and friars assumed the chair; for possessing solely what learning there was, they filled

* There were three persons in the east, almost contemporaries, of this name; two of whom were successively patriarchs of Antioch; and, as Dupin observes, "are often mistaken for each other." But Dupin also has confounded one of these with the Sinaitic monk, of whom I am speaking. L'Arroque has shewn the mistake, by proving, that the latter speaks of what happened subsequent to the death of Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria, whom Dupin himself states to have survived the patriarch Anastasius II. some years.

Christendom with the air-drawn froth of their lucubrations, which the breath of infallibility puffed into articles of faith.

PHILODOX.

Do you mean to say that Anastasius first invented transubstantiation?

ORTHODOX.

No; but he appears to have been the first who, in the Church, deviated from the language of his predecessors, by denying that the elements are the figure of Christ's body and blood. It was, however, a mere deviation in terms; because he speaks of the body of Christ, as being "*different bread* from that which is bought in the shambles", &c.

In the eighth century, Damascenus, the last of the Greek Fathers, and whose writings have had a very extraordinary influence upon the faith of that portion of the Church; a violent advocate for image-worship, and on that account anathematized by the Council of Constantinople, reduced the hyperbolical language of rhetoric, into the form of demonstration, and maintained a corporal presence. But his doctrine is that of consubstantiation: the Lutheran rather than the Romish notion: and from him Luther borrowed certain of his well-known il-

lustrations, as that “a burning coal is not mere coal, but coal conjoined with fire”, &c.

PHILODOX.

The Second Council of Nice declared transubstantiation to be then the doctrine of the Church.

ORTHODOX.

The question of a corporal presence was first conciliarly brought forward in the year 754 by the Council of Constantinople, consisting of 238 bishops. In their decree, which swept images out of the Church, they advert, in way of illustration, to the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, which was accounted to “be the type and image of God”; and they infer that, to avoid idolatry, He would have no human effigy, but chose bread to be an effigy of Himself. Now this testimony deserves the more attention, inasmuch as it is not brought into discussion, but alleged in proof from a tenet admitted on all sides.

PHILODOX.

This assembly is entitled to no respect. The Romanists admit it not to be a general council; and all its decrees were annulled by the Second Council of Nice.

ORTHODOX.

It is much more entitled to respect than that vile conventicle, which the Roman Church, to her eternal disgrace, acknowledges. Its proceedings were much more consistent with scripture and primitive tradition. But be this as it may. We have therein the testimony of two hundred and thirty-eight bishops, headed by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and legally convened and sanctioned by the emperor, that the corporal presence was not the doctrine of the Church. It is true, the Empress Irene, having murdered her own son and sovereign, usurped the throne, and thrust a layman into the patriarchal see; convened a body of prelates at Nice, to subvert all the proceedings of the former council: and this despicable assembly, whose proceedings were scandalous; whose idolatry was gross and blasphemous; whose anathemas were directly denounced against the word of God; and whose decrees are grounded upon such palpable forgeries, and enforced by such arguments, that scarcely a member of the Roman communion (though bound to receive all its dicta as the infallible utterance of the Holy Spirit) ever ventures to bring them forward, or utter a word in their defence:—this assembly, I say, convened for the express purpose of condemning the former, and de-

stroying all primitive tradition, inveighs against the prelates of Constantinople upon every topic ; and having loaded all their sentences and adherents with a string of execrations, which has no parallel except in the ravings of Bedlam ; amongst the rest, flies out upon the above remark respecting the Eucharist ; and solemnly swears, with an anathema appended, that none of the Fathers ever called the Eucharist a figure or similitude ; which is so wilful a violation of truth, or such excessive ignorance, that not a Romanist offers a syllable of apology for it. Yet this conventicle, which had the most inordinate digestion for absurdities and falsehoods, of almost any body of men that ever met together, does not deny the substance of bread and wine in the Eucharist, but merely, in their bitter spleen against the Byzantine Council, wrangles at the use of the term figure or effigy.

PHILODOX.

But, by admitting so early an origin of the corporal presence, you contradict many Protestant writers, who deny that it was introduced before the time of Paschasius.

ORTHODOX.

Herein there is no contradiction. . . What is at pre-

sent called transubstantiation, had no earlier origin than the time of Paschasius ; but the new fashion of quarrelling with the old and sanctioned language of the Fathers, promulged by the high authority of Damascenus in the east, and by the reception of the Nicene Council in the west, united to the veneration paid to both, on account of their strong sanction to image worship, paved the way for the revival and ultimate reception of the heretical opinion of Eutyches ; which had now more advantages than before, in the decreased piety and increasing darkness of a superstitious age.

It was impossible that the new notions should not occasion some controversy. In the year 818, Paschasius, a monk of Corby in France, published his memorable book ; and it is admitted by Belarmin, that “ he was the first who wrote seriously on the subject”. So that, it seems, the world for eight centuries knew not what they believed, until a French friar rose up to tell them.

PHILODOX.

But Radbert constantly speaks as a man who knew that he was merely explaining a doctrine universally received.

ORTHODOX.

This may be refuted from the book itself. He

writes not like one dogmatically stating what all Catholics received ; but as conscious that he was hammering out something strange. Having stated the old doctrine, that the bread and wine was a figure, &c. he adds, “ I shall tell you something more wonderful ” ; and he fulfils his promise ; for forth issues transubstantiation : and to prove the truth of it in the usual mode of the times, he fills a chapter with marvels and miracles ; affirming “ that our Lord was often seen in the shape of a lamb, in the hands of the priest ” ; and that, upon one occasion, “ an angel shewed Christ to a priest, in the form of a child upon the altar ; and, having nursed and kissed him, swallowed him up ” : with much more of the same profane legends. This is he that first wrote “ seriously ” upon the subject, says Bellarmin. “ The first ”, says Sermond, “ who so explained the genuine sense as to open the way for others.”

PHILODOX. /

It seems, however, that this doctrine was acknowledged to be the orthodox faith.

ORTHODOX.

This likewise may be refuted by Paschasius himself. He speaks as one promulging a novelty, “ Some reprov'd me ; some doubted ; many are

of another opinion ; many are blind, and cannot see", &c. These are not the words of a man, announcing the universal creed of the Catholic Church. He submitted his book to the judgment of a friend, one Frudegard ; he tells him that he had been censured for teaching a wrong doctrine. He begs of him to tell him what " might be more intelligibly believed, or what was charitably to be reprehended in him". When attacked, he never shelters himself under the universal antiquity of his faith, but defends himself by such arguments as he could find ; some sorry enough indeed ; and others not easily reconcilable with his opinions.

No sooner had the Paschasian hypothesis appeared, than it was directly contradicted, and that by some of the highest characters of the age, in station and attainments. Rabanus, Archbishop of Mayence, tutor to the Emperor Charlemagne, and acknowledged to be one of the greatest and most learned prelates of the era, and termed by Cardinal Baronius, the " prince of theologians" of his time, directly disapproved of the doctrine. Heribald, Bishop of Auxerre, and Amalarius, who was sent on an embassy to Rome by the emperor, were of the like opinion. In fact, so far from the work being received as the Catholic exposition, it occasioned so

violent a controversy and opposition, that the Emperor Charles the Bald, employed two of the greatest divines and scholars of his court, Bertram and John Scot, to write against it. The work of the former still survives, and is the most valuable treatise on the subject that has been handed down. And it is peculiarly interesting to us of the Church of England, as being the best exposition of the views of our Reformers. This book first opened the eyes of Bishop Ridley, and, through him, of Archbishop Cranmer; and it appears to have truly deserved the high eulogium pronounced by the former of these martyrs, at his mock examination before his death. "I have, to confirm my opinion, what Bertram wrote; a man orthodox and learned; and who for now seven hundred years, down even to the present age, hath ever been esteemed Catholic; whose treatise, read and pondered; weighing the age, erudition, and holiness of the writer, his allegations of the ancients, and his manifold and solid arguments; I must certainly wonder, if any one fearing God could venture, with a safe conscience, to contradict him in the Eucharist. He first gave me a check, and first withdrew me from the popular error of the Roman Church to the more diligent study of scripture, and the ancient ecclesiastical

writers ; and this I speak before God, who knoweth that in this I say I lie not."*

PHILODOX.

The authority of Bertram's book has been disputed by some, and its meaning doubted by others.

ORTHODOX.

It has grievously perplexed the Romish writers to find the reformed doctrine of the Eucharist, as held at this day by the Anglican Church, advocated and explained in the ninth century as the only Catholic doctrine, by one whose estimation for learning and piety is evinced by his being twice publicly called upon to handle the two profoundest controversies of his time, Predestination and the Eucharist ; and whose orthodoxy is proclaimed, not only in his having been, as Bishop Ridley remarks, "always accounted Catholic", but especially chosen to defend the Roman Church against the Greek. So decidedly adverse is his book to the corporal presence, that the Reformers had little else to do than repeat his sentiments, and amplify his reasoning. True it is, modern Romanists have attempted to brand him with heresy ; for, as Turrian says, "to quote Bertram, what is it but to say, that the heresy

* *Protestatio Ridleii.*

of Calvin is not new?" However, others more discreet and cautious have avoided this. Father Mabillon blames them for "branding an author with heresy, whom their ancestors always esteemed Catholic." Of his orthodoxy, in fact, the above proof is sufficient, viz. that when Pope Nicholas I. wrote to the bishops of France, desiring them to take up the Roman cause against the Greeks, they pitched upon Bertram, as the most fit and competent divine to be found; and he acquitted himself of the duty.

PHILODOX.

Has not the genuineness of the present copies of this famous treatise been called in question?

ORTHODOX.

When it was first printed at Colen in 1532, the appearance of a theologian, seven hundred years old, of such admitted eminence, so expressly contradicting a doctrine which had long been made the all-in-all of their creed, threw their doctors into consternation. Some thought the most expeditious way was to denounce the author for a heretic. Others, aware that this summary mode would not answer, attempted to bend and strain him to a Roman sense; but wearied in the struggle with so refractory and stubborn a subject, he was at length thrown

aside in despair, and affirmed to be so interpolated and corrupted by heretics, as to be perfectly useless and unintelligible. This comfortable sentence, which had so categorically dismissed an untoward witness, was, however, ere long, annulled by the practical refutation of the erudite and candid Mabillon, who, having found a MS. copy of Bertram, eight hundred years old, in the monastery of Lobes, published it; and it then appeared, that the former copy, so far from being corrupted, differed by the omission of a single word alone, from the Lobes MS.; which word Dr. Hopkins has, very properly, admitted into his English translation. No sooner had this unlucky discovery been divulged, than a fresh trial was made to bend him to an orthodox meaning; and those who wish to see with what success this might be attempted, would do well to read the treatise and the attempt; it is effected by no wresting more hardy than that of simply changing VISIBLY into INVISIBLY, and a few other trifling alterations of the same sort, neither difficult nor rare to Papal patriots.

The English translator has ably drawn an argument from the treatment which this book sustained, against the boasted unity of Romanists, and the value of that infallibility which is to deliver the Church from the dangerous and uncertain interpre-

tation of private spirits. Here is an author, professedly explaining the most profound and important doctrine of faith. Yet can their writers, in no wise, agree whether he be orthodox or heterodox; Catholic or heretical. The Council of Trent thrusts him into the index of prohibited books. Notwithstanding this, their divines wrangle about him, as though such Council had never existed, or such index never been published. "He is a heretic", exclaims Bellarmin. "He was always accounted a Catholic", retorts Mabillon. "He was heterodox", affirms Father Cellot. "He was orthodox", replies Labbe. "His tract is spurious and condemned", affirms Archbishop De Marca. "It is genuine and allowed", says Dean Boileau; and so on.

PHILODOX.

There is a difficulty, no doubt, in these conflicting opinions respecting Bertram.

ORTHODOX.

The confusion in which they are involved proves that the difficulty is inextricable: and the more they strive to deliver themselves, the deeper they sink. The single solution is obvious. Transubstantiation was not the doctrine of the Church in the days of Bertram.

PHILODOX.

You named John Scotus.

ORTHODOX.

Contemporary with Bertram, and a man of great learning and judgment; employed by the emperor to write on the subject. His book is lost. But, as Dupin allows, he went further than Bertram; for, in his treatise, "he asserted that the sacraments of the altar were not the real body and blood of Christ, but only a remembrance of both."

To accumulate evidence on this point, would be to abstract the volumes of Bishop Cosins, Claude, L'Arroque, and others, who have expressly written on the subject. A few names can only be adverted to. The Emperor Charlemagne, a saint, and the greatest benefactor of Rome, uses language adverse to this doctrine, in a letter to Alcuin. Prudent, another saint and martyr of the Church, who is termed "the light of the French, and the ornament of bishops", held, as Archbishop Hincmar affirms, the opinion of Scotus; Florus, a deacon of the same Church, "wrote upon the mass, and speaks of it like Bertram", says Dupin. To these we may add the names of Hatto, Bishop of Basle, Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, and others; together with the council of Gallican prelates at Cressy. But we

will not allude to any particularly, except Heribold, who held the same tenet. Yet he was Prince Chaplain to Charles the Bald; an office which gave him the supreme administration of ecclesiastical affairs in the empire, and a rank above all dignitaries and prelates.

PHILODOX.

What course did the popes pursue in this controversy occasioned by Paschasius?

ORTHODOX.

Their conduct admits of no solution favourable to the Roman hypothesis. Upon this vital point, thus orthodoxly expounded by Paschasius, and heretically contradicted by some of the most learned, dignified, and eminent prelates, the pontiffs, Nicholas I. and his successor Adrian II. maintained a profound silence. Nay, Nicholas allowed Heribold to fill the highest ecclesiastical office in the empire. He permitted Bertram to be chosen to defend the Roman Church against the Greek. Yet Nicholas was not an ignorant prelate, neither idle, nor immersed in vice, like many of his predecessors and successors: but a person of great ecclesiastical learning and activity. Would such a man have allowed notorious heretics to hold the highest stations, and to be invited to advocate the cause of the

Church, which their dangerous opinions more injured than any hostile foe could do?

The same holds good of his successor Adrian II. whom Dupin describes as "zealous for the welfare of the Catholic Church". "He diligently looked", says Platina, "into every thing that could concern the honour of God." Yet, here was heresy, rearing its front in the highest stations of the Church; and he noticed it not. Nay, though he had a violent quarrel with the French emperor and clergy; though the former bitterly rebuked him for not adhering to the customs of the Church, yet the angry pontiff, in his letters, retorts not the accusation, nor gives the slightest hint of heterodoxy prevailing in their very bosom. The inference is obvious. Either the corporal presence was not then the received faith; or these two popes were heretical.

Such was the state of the question, at the close of the ninth century. It appears that, previous to Paschasius, an opinion savouring of consubstantiation had been promulged in the Greek, and probably admitted into the Latin Church. But such an opinion as the one now called transubstantiation, the annihilation of the bread and wine, and the sole presence of the natural body and blood of Christ, was unknown in the Church until Pascha-

sius arose, and delivered this notion, which was immediately denied by many, and questioned by more, as himself relates; which was opposed and denounced by some of the most exalted and dignified characters of the age; and openly defended by none that I am aware of. Here then you may safely take a stand; and call upon them to shew, that what is now called transubstantiation (for the name was yet unknown) was the faith of any prior Church, or Catholic writer, much less of the whole universe.

As the next century dawned, religious darkness became "deeper and deeper still." The carnal doctrine, more suited to this grossly ignorant and superstitious age; more favourable to the now determined object of humbling all things beneath the yoke of an aspiring and sensual priesthood, made rapid progress; and the voice of opposition became fainter daily. Yet there is evidence that its progress was not entirely uninterrupted: as, for instance, RATHERIUS, Bishop of Verona, preached the spiritual tenet, uncensured, as it were, at the very gates of Rome.

PHILODOX.

I should derive more satisfaction to see some evidence, that transubstantiation was not the doc-

trine of our own Church; considering that Archbishop Lanfranc was its most zealous advocate.

ORTHODOX.

In the tenth century, it was introduced into England under Archbishop Odo, with the customary recommendation, a string of pretended miracles; as William of Malmsbury testifies. But still the old tenet continued to be the Anglican DOCTRINE, until after the Conquest; when Lanfranc, the champion of the carnal presence, and the rigid opponent of Berenger, obtained the primacy. The evidence of this is more decisive, with respect to our own Church, than, perhaps, any other, from the well-known Saxon homily of Elfric, which was ordered to be read to the people before every Easter, in order to prepare them for the sacrament. This homily is not only the same in doctrine with Bertram; but, as Archbishop Usher observes, "in many places directly translated from him". It is a pleasing reflection to consider, that the Divine Goodness led our holy Reformers to the same source, whence, in earlier and better days, the ancient Church of England had drawn instruction for her flock: thus her faith remained what it was before, merely filtered from the Romish dregs.

In such an age as the tenth century, the old doc-

trine had nothing to sustain it, but truth, and spirituality, and reason; the poorest supports it could have found. The new tenet, devoid of these, possessed every other. It suited the ignorance of the multitude; and it harmonized with the ambition and lofty pretensions of the clergy. It being, therefore, impossible that doctrines, so opposite in their consequences, could both be tolerated, matters came at length to a decision.

The Bishop of Angers, and his archdeacon, Berenger, publicly taught their people the ancient tenet; and reprobated the Paschasian novelty. The prelate appears to have been soon intimidated by the clamors of the popular party; but the archdeacon was not so easily silenced. Berenger is described, even by his adversaries, as no common man, but of exemplary piety and learning. The controversy is tedious and obscure. It seems, however, that Nicholas II. having convened a council at Rome, that gross retraction was prepared which I have before repeated; and Berenger, terrified by the noise and violence of the pope and synod, signed it. But they, I suppose, overdid the business: and the recantation is too strong for any of their modern champions to digest. Yet, be they ashamed of it, or otherwise, *this* is the primitive confession; *this* the recorded and solemn declaration of what transub-

stantiation really is. The inventors of the doctrine were, at least, honest and straightforward ; they meant to establish a carnal tenet, and a carnal tenet they enforced. The subsequent exposition of a spiritual and glorified body ; of accidents without substances, &c., was a dress prepared by the schools ; spun from a cobweb woof, to give a decent clothing to this uncouth offspring of human absurdity and presumption.

This confession Berenger retracted, and preached as before. Nor was it until a lapse of four-and-twenty years, that the famous Pope Hildebrand was most reluctantly enforced to take up the dispute. He ordered Berenger to sign a fresh retraction, so loosely worded, that Bertram himself might have set his hand to it. And though herein he may be said to have censured Berenger ; he yet far more decidedly condemned the former pope and his council, by removing from the shoulders of the heresiarch a confession of faith solemnly prepared by infallible authority. It rested not here ; for the advocates of the carnal tenet, grievously dissatisfied with so ambiguous a confession, never ceased to importune the pontiff until he had compelled Berenger to sign another, much stronger than the last, but importantly different from that of Nicholas. The arch-deacon, however, again retracted ; and not only so,

but wrote afresh against the corporal doctrine. Yet, notwithstanding this open defiance of papal power; notwithstanding the incessant clamors and entreaties of Lanfranc and the rest, the pope persisted in refusing to take any further notice of the affair, and Berenger died in peace.

Now unless this far-famed pontiff was satisfied that the opinion of this controvertist was the orthodox one, his conduct is inexplicable. But happily, he has not left us to conjecture. He affirms, that the Holy Virgin assured him, that Berenger held nothing "except what authentic scripture held." No marvel then, that, in the words of Mosheim, "he left the violent adversaries of his persecuted friend to murmur, scribble, bawl, and refute; whilst he himself observed a profound silence; and persisted in his resolution to put the unhappy man to no further trouble." We need not wonder also that the Council of Brescia should pass a decree against this pope, as a "favourer of the Berengarian heresy."

PHILODOX.

Dupin treats that censure as groundless; and says, "that council was displeased with his lenity."

ORTHODOX.

But was not Hildebrand the last of men to shew

lenity to an incorrigible heretic ; who continued to despise an authority which it was the labour of his whole life to exalt to the loftiest summit ? But be that as it may ; we have in him the solemn declaration of a pope and canonized saint, that the Virgin Mary has decided that Berenger's doctrine was true and scriptural.

PHILODOX.

Yet when Berenger promulged his opinion, "the whole Church rose up against him." *

ORTHODOX.

There is proof to the contrary. His adversaries declare, that his doctrine had infected all France, Italy, Germany, England, &c. ; though they might more truly have said, the old faith was not yet expelled from those countries. Many were terrified to recant ; numbers were driven from their homes ; and the arm of tyranny raised in all quarters, to enforce this Eutychian heresy in the Church.

There yet wanted a proper term to express the dogma. At length, Stephen, Bishop of Autun, hammered out the word "transubstantiation", which offended the famous master of the sentences, Lombard ; who was unwilling that the Church should

* End of Controversy, L. XXXVII.

define of what kind the sacramental conversion was. However, the newly-found epithet marvelously pleased the pope, the ambitious and arbitrary Innocent III., to whom this kingdom owes such weighty obligations, for placing it under an interdict; labouring to render it a province of France; actually subjecting it in vassalage to his see; annulling Magna Charta, and trampling under foot all the liberty it possessed. This arrogant pontiff summoned an assembly in his palace; thither he brought a string of resolutions ready prepared; of which transubstantiation was one; the right of persecuting heretics, and deposing heretical princes, another; and the excommunicating of the barons who had procured British liberty, a third. Upon all these, the said assembly set the stamp of infallibility, and having broken up, this is now the sixth general Lateran council of the Catholic Church, whose decrees are as binding upon the belief and conscience of Romanists as holy writ.

Thus in 1215, transubstantiation became an article of faith. And “no sooner was this bell rung out”, than all its accompanying banditti poured in upon the Church. To believe transubstantiation now became the test of Catholicism. A crusade was proclaimed against the heterodox: the fiends of desolation were let loose upon the Waldenses, and

all other heretics ; and because these temporary civil arms were inefficient to crush the opposing plague, and to penetrate the secret haunts of disaffection, a permanent instrument was established in the deadly tribunal of the Inquisition. An entire revolution took place in the divinity of the schools. The doctors set their wits to work, to fabricate a system of philosophy to suit the new divinity ; which not less repelled the primitive logic, than the primitive faith. Then followed the elevation of the host, the adoration, the procession, the feast of Corpus Christi, and all the accumulated appendages of this idolatrous and superstitious service. Such were the swelling banners of the triumph now obtained over the voice of scripture and tradition ; over the dictates of reason and common sense.

PHILODOX.

But, supposing this to have been the case in the Western Church, how does it explain its prevalence in the Greek, Eastern, Nestorian and other Churches, which holding the most bitter aversion to the Latins, nevertheless universally received this faith ; nor was it questioned by any before the Reformation, except “ by a handful of Vaudois peasants.” There is but one way of accounting for this, viz. says Bishop Milner, “ that mentioned by

Dr. Bailey, which is to suppose that, on some one night, all the Christians of the world went to sleep sound Protestants, and awoke the next morning rank Papists.”*

ORTHODOX.

This, I presume, is a jocose mode of settling a question, when arguments fail. We give them facts, and they reply by a sleepy hypothesis. St. Jerome, however, parallels it in a case of the reality of which I presume they doubt not. So rapidly, yet so imperceptibly, did Arianism overrun the universal Church, that he says, “all the world was astonished to see itself Arian.” To be sure, the few orthodox might thus argue against the heresy;—“From the beginning it was not so; we have scripture and primitive tradition on our side; we can prove by both, that your doctrine is a novelty.” But what would it avail against a demonstration so all-sufficient as this:—“If Trinitarianism be true, then we must suppose, that on some one night all the Christians of the world went to bed sound Trinitarians, and rose rank Arians”?

This plausible story is soon dismissed. Dr. Milner confines his dissentients to “a handful of Vaudois peasants.” Now, without travelling be-

* End of Controversy, L. XI.

yond the west, we have seen that numbers of no light name opposed transubstantiation at the first ; and it is acknowledged, that the adherents of Berenger filled Germany, Italy, England, &c. But had the opposition been confined to a “handful of Vaudois peasants”, it follows not that the truth might not remain with them as it did in elder times, with the “seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal”, in the general apostasy of the Jewish Church: and at a period somewhat later, when Israel, become corrupt as Sodom and Gomorrah, was only preserved from its fate by “a very small remnant”, left unto it “as the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done.” Christ designates his true followers as a “little flock”; and their own writers allow, that a time shall be when apostasy shall well nigh extinguish the name of Christianity.

But of these “Vaudois peasants”, it is unhappily too true that they have for many ages been a “handful”. But who made them so? Who reduced them to this humble state? Rome and her bloody Church; which with transubstantiation acquired the summit of her usurpation; and, with its attendant persecutors, the height of her enormities. They were not a “handful” when the Papal banditti were let loose upon them. Did it need coun-

cils and armies, crusades and inquisitions to disperse a "handful of men"? Six hundred years has the Vaudois bush been burning in the fires of tyranny and barbarity, and yet remains unconsumed.

PHILODOX.

But were not these Waldenses a disorderly licentious rabble, "obscene Manichees", without ministry or discipline?

ORTHODOX.

"Obscenity" is an ill-chosen term to express Manicheism*. Romanists have laboured hard to confound them with the Manichees: but the charge is sufficiently refuted even by the testimony of their most remorseless enemies†.

* Vide an able abstract of Manicheism in a recent number of the Quarterly Review.

† It is pitiable to see the vile falsehoods raised against the Waldenses, received, without examination; as in Mr. Gifford's *Hist. of France*, V. I. p. 412. Such neglect of truth and enquiry in historians is unpardonable. Mr. Gilly, for his volume, deserves the thanks of every feeling heart; and our gratitude is due to Mr. Sims, for his publication of Peyran's valuable Letters. It is cheering, and of pleasing omen, to see attention directed to this "long-neglected vine" which for ages endured the bitter blasts of Anti-Christ. A good history of this people is yet a desideratum. Mr. Jones's is by no means satisfactory.

That they were a "disorderly rabble" is a similar calumny. They kept up primitive discipline, as far as the horrid persecutions of Rome would permit. They retained episcopal succession; and this becoming almost extinct, was handed through their surviving bishop, Stephen, to the Bohemian and Moravian Churches; a branch of which last took shelter in this country a century ago; and after a minute examination by that profound ecclesiastical scholar, Archbishop Potter, was here acknowledged as an ancient episcopal Church. And here they have still kept the "noiseless tenor of their way"; asking protection only; disturbing not the powers that be; proselyting not in the Church that shelters them; but unostentatiously seeking disciples for Christ, where self-inflation has not popular applause to feed on. Their praise is on the frozen shores of Greenland.

The supposed prevalence of transubstantiation in the Greek and Eastern Churches, is so involved in their political state, and in the history of Romish machination and despotism, that it is scarcely possible to glance at it in so narrow a compass as our time allows.

You will remember, that the novel mode of deviating from the authorized language of tradition originated in the Greek Church; and thence de-

scended to the Latin. Damascenus was the last and most esteemed of the Greek Fathers; and it is probable that his notion of consubstantiation may have given a tinge to their whole divinity. But that they held transubstantiation, though asserted even by Protestant writers, never has been proved. So far are the evidences, as many as I have seen, from establishing the fact, that they appear to prove the contrary. Has the Greek Church gone further than the tenet of Damascenus? This has not been shewn. Certain it is, they did not admit the only term expressive of transubstantiation into their creeds, although they have a word precisely synonymous, *μετουσιωσις*. The inseparable appendages of the doctrine they have always rejected, as worshipping the elements, processions, &c.

The first evidence to be considered will be the Liturgy now used by them, and bearing the name of St. Chrysostom. After the words of consecrating have been uttered, the priest supplicates thus: "We entreat, and pray, and beseech, send down Thy Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these gifts." The deacon here brings the "holy bread", saying, "Bless, Sir, this holy bread." The priest then says, "Make this bread the precious body of thy Christ." In like manner the cup, to which he adds over both, the words, "changing by Thy Holy Spirit."

Now, not only the same objections lie here, as against the Roman Missal; proving, from the prayer, that the original compiler knew nothing of the corporal presence; “but”, as Dr. Covel argues, “there is a vast and irreconcilable difference between the Greeks and Latins”, in the essential form and matter. The Latin Church believes that the conversion is made by the mystical words, “This is my body.” But the Greek Church denies it; for, after using those terms, she prays, that God would “make this bread the precious body of Christ”; implying that no transubstantiation had yet taken place; neither expecting any carnal change to be produced by the latter words; for Romanists justly esteem it an absurdity, that bread should be substantially the body of Christ—the species of the one being irreconcilably opposite to that of the other. Neither do the Greeks even pray, that the bread may be made the body of Christ *absolutely*; but that it may be made so *to those who receive it*. That the change implied is moral, not physical, may be concluded from analogy of the expressions used in their other services. Thus, they supplicate that the baptismal water may be made the “fountain of incorruption, the expiation of sins”, &c.; that the holy oil may be made the “armour of righteousness, the anointing of incorruption”, &c.; that the holy salt may be

made, "the sacrifice of joy"; and much more of the same kind. The language is equally strong with that used in the Eucharist: the change implored is moral; nay, divine and supernatural; but not substantial: they still repeatedly call it bread after consecration, as when the deacon saith to the priest, "Divide this holy bread"; and the custom of pouring hot water into the consecrated wine, seems inconsistent with the belief that it is the natural blood of Christ; which, surely, they would not thus profane.

To this we may add, their constant disuse of the term transubstantiation, which, I believe, can be found in none of their divines earlier than Gabriel Severus, a man of suspicious fidelity, and living as it were yesterday. Whoever is even slightly acquainted with the Greek Fathers and authors, has found that they use many expressions implying a moral effect produced in the Eucharistical elements by consecration, as *μεταβάλλειν*, *μεταποιεῖσθαι*, "to change", *μεταστοιχειοῦσθαι*, "to be trans-elemented", (i. e. says Augustin, "the element, by the word, is made the sacrament,") *μετασχηματίζεσθαι*, "to be transformed"; and other such terms, signifying a moral change. But the term *μετουσιῶσις*, which alone accurately expresses the Roman tenet, is absent not merely from the creeds and authorities of the

Greeks ; but even from their writers, until a very modern period.

To bring the Greek and Eastern Churches to this belief, certainly no means have been left untried. At that Lateran Council of Innocent III., which first announced this article of faith, every artifice was used to shew their assent. Constantinople and Jerusalem, in consequence of the crusade, were then in the hands of the Latin Church ; Henry, Emperor of Germany, occupying the former, and the titular crusading monarch the latter : the legitimate emperor and the lawful patriarchs being driven out, and two nominees of the Pope possessing the patriarchal thrones. These intruders, with two pretended representatives of the sees of Alexandria and Antioch, attended the Lateran Assembly : so that, beneath the wing of the Pope and his pageants, the fiats of this Council strut forth under the universal authority of the five patriarchs of the Christian world ; four of whom, assuredly, knew nothing of the business. And although it is pretended that the decrees were written in both languages, yet we know that the only term which would respond to the Latin copy, was never used by the Greeks to express the Eucharistic change for centuries afterwards. The planners of this Council, therefore, overacted the farce ; and should

rather have kept these fictitious patriarchs off the stage, than brought them forward to display thus grossly the forgery and pretence.

The attempts made so incessantly to bring the Greek Church into conformity with the Latin, appear to have had no important effect earlier than the fifteenth century, when the rapid progress of the Turks, and the impending ruin of Constantinople, compelled the emperor to take measures to secure the friendship of Rome. The Council of Florence was then sitting; and hither he and the patriarch came, with other prelates and ecclesiastics. Here, as upon all other occasions, the belief in the corporal presence was made a part of the terms of reconciliation. Yet even then, the Greeks went no farther than that three or four of them admitted that the elements were *τελειοῦσθαι*, consecrated by the words of Christ; which the Latins have not blushed to render *transubstantiated*. It is well known, that the proceedings at this Council, were annulled by the Greek and whole Eastern Church, who excommunicated all the parties concerned. The Russians imprisoned their primate for his part in the business; and Bessarion, by whose art the reconciliation had mainly been effected, was obliged to fly for safety to Rome, where he was rewarded with a Cardinal's hat.

Perhaps, it is scarcely necessary to proceed later than this. Whether the Greek Church has been since converted to the Roman dogma, is of no great importance. With the triumph of the Turks, and the fall of Constantinople, she has been prepared by poverty, ignorance, and oppression, for simony, bribery, and every corruption.

From the sad moment that the patriarchs became the mere nominees of their Moslem masters, and were put in as the wishes of those who could bribe highest inclined, every advantage was afforded that Rome could wish for. The better sort of Greek youths were regularly sent to Italy for instruction. The patriarchs and prelates were tampered with by every allurements of interest and every inducement of terror. Yet, when the Reformers sent the Augsburgh confession to the patriarch Jeremias, although his reply is, on this topic, very confused, and evidently written under the restraints of fear, his decision is in no wise admissible on the transubstantiating hypothesis: for, maintaining a real presence, he expresses himself unable to define of what kind the change is: but, says, “it is ὑπὲρ λόγον καὶ ἔννοιαν, beyond what may be said or thought”; whereas transubstantiation consists in a positive definition of the mode. He says, that the element is still bread; “the bread is made the

body".—And whereas the Latins, of necessity, maintain that the Eucharist is "the very flesh and blood which suffered on the cross, and which is now glorified in heaven"; so far is Jeremias from allowing it, that he defines it to be blasphemy. "Not that either, then, was the flesh of the Lord, which he bore about him, given to the apostles to eat, and his blood to drink; or now, in celebrating the divine mystery, does the body of the Lord descend from heaven; for that is blasphemy." If he does not herein denounce transubstantiation, what is the meaning of his words?—In the following century, flourished Cyril Lucaris, the most eminent of all the patriarchs that Constantinople hath seen in her days of captivity. His views were altogether so alien to the Roman tenets, that they ceased not to cabal and conspire against him, until they had accomplished his deposition and subsequent murder; effected by unbounded bribing with the Turks: and part of the sum expended in this holy proceeding was ten thousand dollars, bequeathed by a devout female to purposes of piety. From that period, the Greek prelates have been generally, either the tools of Rome, or hired to her interest, or, with the fate of Cyril constantly before their eyes, unwilling to resist her.

These machinations have not been confined to

later ages, nor to what may be strictly termed the Greek community ; but have, in fact, extended through every portion of the Eastern Church ; and through the whole period of her declining state. When the crusades overran those parts of Christendom, the lawful bishops were expelled ; Latins placed in their seats ; and every thing conformed to the Italian doctrines. Palestine, Syria, &c. were filled with their monks and schools. Emissaries in all ages have been sent in and out among them. There is not a part where Rome had not her prelates, priests, and missionaries ; whose instructions were not so much to convert Infidels, as to bring schismatics and heretics to the Roman faith. Every thing which wealth and learning could effect, upon a poor, ignorant, and corrupted people, was employed. And when this was ineffectual, terror and persecution were raised against them. Thus, at Jerusalem, so late as the sixteenth century, the patriarch Nectarius fled from his city to escape the violence of the Romanists. Sophronius preserved himself in his see by bribery alone. Theophanes, his successor, was obliged to implore the protection of the Grand Seignior against the Papists : and Dositheus, (of whose conformity with their notions they loudly vaunt,) lived in perpetual alarm from these restless and malignant

bigots. "I will here", says Dr. Covel, "positively affirm, the present state of the Eastern, especially the Greek, Church, to be this: the Turk and other governors let them all alone, in the free profession and practice of their religion; but wealthy Rome and her pestilent emissaries will not; being, in this point, far more inhuman and barbarous than the Mahometans themselves."*

Let us, however, argue upon their own grounds. Romanists exult in nothing more than the extraordinary prosperity of their missions: it is made an express proof of their exclusive claim to Catholicity; and Dr. Milner fills a chapter with the details of it. He boasts of their successes in conversion; of the innumerable communities of Catholics all the world over; that their "religion, with its several establishments, is completely protected, and *unboundedly propagated*." He particularly names their regularly organized congregations throughout every part of the Eastern Church: especially in Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Ethiopia, &c. that "there are numerous Catholic priests and bishops, with numerous flocks, throughout the greater part of Asia", with much more to the same purpose†. Now, if such are their wonderful successes in filling every part of the globe with their tenets, it is

* On the Greek Church, p. 156.

† L. xxvi.

perfectly futile to inquire into the doctrines of those Churches among whom they have been so amazingly prosperous. Therefore, if transubstantiation was found among all these, it would not weigh a feather in the scale. We must look to them before Rome extended thus widely her triumphs. And sufficient proof there is, that, in their better days, they received no such doctrine.

If we pass the boundary of the Greek Church, strictly so called, we know the Romish dogma has not been held by the others. In the fourteenth century, the testimony to the disbelief of the Armenians in this tenet is irrefragable. It is an unquestioned fact of history; avowed by the inquisitor-general, Carmes, bishop of Majorca, who enumerates this as one of their heresies; and it is fully argued upon in the letters addressed to this Church by John XXII. and Benedict XII., whose language avows that the Armenians “do not hold transubstantiation, but believe the sacrament to be a representation or figure of the body and blood of Christ”; and the latter pontiff says, he had accurate knowledge of it, by very diligent inquiry, and perusal of their books. So that here is indubitable authority, that, at so late a period, this great Church was unacquainted with the dogma.—But I am transgressing the limits of your patience: and will, there-

fore, only briefly advert to the remainder. The Malabar Christians, in giving the elements, say, "Receive and eat all ye of THIS BREAD." The Abyssinians use the words "THIS BREAD is my body"; and after consecration the priest prays, "Commemorating Thy death and resurrection, we offer Thee THIS BREAD AND CUP", &c. "Send Thy Holy Spirit ON THIS BREAD AND CUP, which are the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord."—And in fact, with respect to the Nestorian churches in general, one observation may suffice. It was impossible that, holding the faith of but one nature in Christ, they could believe transubstantiation. If they have deviated, as some say, from their characteristic tenet, that proves nothing as to the ancient doctrine.

Indeed, much as the *Greek Church* may have been corrupted, I must remark, that although some Protestant writers admit her present belief in transubstantiation, and although the truth or falsehood of this is of no consequence to the discussion, yet I have never been able to find any positive and distinct proof of it. It is not every one that is competent to put such a query as would elicit the fact in this case. True it is, when the question has been asked, whether they believe the elements to be the body and blood of Christ, they reply in the affirmative. And if this be enough to prove

the fact, I see not why the whole Protestant Church is not transubstantialist also. But when it has been properly asked,—Whether it be an article of their faith, that the elements are converted into the very substantial body of Christ, which is now in heaven; whether this be numerically the same natural body which he bore on earth, and carried into heaven; whether the entire substance of bread and wine vanishes, so that the accidents alone remain? &c.—as far as I find, those among them who are able to understand this, invariably deny it*. Thus Sir George Wheler, having inquired of the Bishop of Salona what the bread and wine were after consecration, he replied, “the body and blood of Christ.” Yet when asked as to a carnal change, he demanded, “Whether they thought them so much beasts as to believe such an absurdity?”†

PHILODOX.

But, as far as the Russian Church is concern-

* The excellent Claude proposed a string of queries for Dr. Covel to obtain a reply from the Greeks on the point: “but”, says the doctor, “M. Claude supposed by his queries, that the Greeks and Easterlings were learned and well versed in this controversy, whereas I never met with one amongst them who ever pretended fully to understand, much less ever offered clearly to answer, any of them.”

† Travels, Vol. II. 198.

ed, Dr. King declares they believe transubstantiation*.

ORTHODOX.

True; and the proof he gives is a refutation of his words, "make THIS BREAD the precious body of thy Christ." I wonder not at the Church of Rome converting the countries of the East, buried in ignorance and darkness, nor yet at the increasing influence of their religion among us, when even learned men will not condescend to satisfy themselves what an important doctrine really is.

However, if we look to the authorized creeds and formularies of the Churches, no such tenet is to be found. The declarations collected in the seventeenth century to swell out the famous "*Perpetuité de la Foi*", convinced none but those who found it easier to take things upon trust, than to inquire diligently into the foundation. They are very opposite to the regular authorized documents of the Greek Church; and are evidently mere laboured Latin divinity, covered under the mystery of Greek types.—How powerfully is man's facility to receive any thing in the affairs of eternity, contrasted with his wariness and caution in temporal concerns! "The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light."

* Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church in Russia.

But even if the Greeks believed in transubstantiation, it is a very different thing from the Latin faith. It is not followed by those results which render the latter so much an object of abhorrence. "If", says Bishop Burnet, "the doctrine of the corporeal presence had rested only in a speculation; though we should have judged those who held it to be very bad philosophers, and no good critics, yet we could have endured it."*—There are no idolatrous services attending it; no worshipping of elements, no processions, private masses, purgatory, indulgences, abstraction of the cup, and all the other appendages which have rendered transubstantiation so thorough and deserved an object of aversion to all who regard the purity of Christian truth. If the Greek opinion be erroneous, it is mere error; but if the Roman, it is the grossest idolatry, as some of their own writers allow; worshipping a bit of bread for the eternal God; and exposing the blessed gospel to the bitter sarcasm of infidels, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans; for thousands have hereby been deterred from the faith, and embraced the conclusion of Averroes, "Of all sects, the Christians are the most foolish, who eat that which they worship."

* Exposition of Art. xxviii, which contains an excellent review of the evidence on this subject.

PHILODOX.

Yet, it is allowed that these practices are inseparable from the belief of transubstantiation.

ORTHODOX.

If this be the case, we may draw thence an irrefragable proof of its falsehood. Shew a solitary instance of such practices for the first thousand years. Were the Fathers blind to these consequences? Did not those holy men, filled with charity and devotion, find out what reverence was due to their divine Master? They counted not their lives dear unto themselves; their blood was the seed, and their works, subordinate to scripture, the preservative, of the faith. Did they believe the elements to be their beloved Lord, when their custom was, to burn what remained uneaten; to make plasters of it; to bury it with the dead; to mix the wine with ink; and to permit people to take it home; and endless other such practices, which refute the modern notion more powerfully than words can do?

Finally, other Churches have not made this tenet the test of Catholicism, and let loose a tide of devastating tyranny over Christendom, to enforce it. If therefore all, equally with them, held the doctrine, yet idle would it be to draw a parallel be-

tween them : for far as the east is from the west ; far as is patient endurance of conflicting opinions from ferocious and systematic persecution ; far as is speculative error from practical idolatry ; so far do they stand severed from the Church of Rome.

DIALOGUE III.

OF COMMUNION IN ONE KIND.

ORTHODOX.

WE will now proceed to those tenets which result from the preceding. And, first, of communion under one species ; which rests mainly upon the authority of the Council of Constance, confirmed, with the customary anathema, by the Council of Trent. This was an immediate and obvious consequence of transubstantiation. It seems needless to dwell long upon it ; inasmuch as the simple dispute is, Which are we to obey ; Christ or Rome ?

PHILODOX.

“ It is true, our blessed Saviour instituted the holy sacrament under two kinds ; but it must be observed, that he then made it a sacrifice, as well as a sacrament, and that he ordained priests, viz. his apostles (for none else were present) to consecrate this sacrament, and offer this sacrifice. . . . Now it was requisite, for the completion of the sacrifice, that the priests should consummate it in both kinds. Hence it is seen, that the command of

Christ, 'drink ye all of this', regards the apostles as priests; not the laity, as communicants."*

ORTHODOX.

We will leave the consideration of so much as relates to the sacrifice in this statement, until our next discussion.—If there be any thing in the above pretence, it proves too much. By the same argument, they may as well take away the bread as the cup.—When Christ instituted the sacrament, "none but the apostles were present." They were present too, not as priests, but as communicants. Christ was the sole priest in that action. To whom he said, "Take, eat"; he said also, "Drink ye all of this"; to whom the one part of the command is addressed, the other is addressed also. The reason for receiving is, "This is my body broken for you; this is my blood shed for you." They who inherit the benefits, are to fulfil the precept. If his body was broken, and his blood poured out for the laity, then to the laity the command of commemorating these blessings applies. How came the people to have any concern in it at all, unless they derive it from the first institution? Romanists say, that "when Christ promised this sacrament to the faithful, he promised in express terms both his body

* End of Controversy, L. xxxix.

and his blood : ‘ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, AND drink his blood, ye have no life in you : whoso eateth my flesh, AND drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.’ ”

PHILODOX.

But “ this does not imply, that they must therefore receive under both kinds.”

ORTHODOX.

Whether it *implies* it or not, you may decide. If, as they argue, those words are a precept for the sacrament, it is peremptorily *commanded*, in language as explicit as “ Thou shalt do no murder ” ; and eternal life suspended upon obedience.

PHILODOX.

But “ the Council of Trent teaches, He who said, ‘ Except ye shall eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you ’ ; said also, ‘ If any man shall eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.’ And He who said, ‘ Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath life eternal ’, also said, ‘ The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.’ ”

ORTHODOX.

Certainly, this infallible exposition only makes our Lord say and unsay ; command with one breath,

and annul with another. Would any sober commentator limit the plenary enactments of a law by the abstract; or not understand, that the shorter sentences are mere repetitions of the former? Is not this opposition of one text to nullify another, the fruitful source of all heresies? Thus the Unitarians: "He who said, 'I and my Father are one', said also, 'My Father is greater than I'; therefore the Son is not coequal with the Father." Or to come even nearer: Is not the Trentine comment on the one sacrament the antitype of the Socinian on the other? The evangelist, indeed, records the command of Christ: "Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"; but we also read, that "the apostles baptized merely in the name of the Lord": therefore the Trinitarian form is not necessary.

PHILODOX.

But the administering of the sacrament by the apostles is spoken of under the phrase, "Breaking of bread"; which implies that it was administered under one kind.

ORTHODOX.

Romanists do not presume to say, that the apostles *consecrated* in one kind; but if the mere term, "Breaking of bread", proves that they communicated in one kind, it proves that they also con-

separated in one kind. Confess, therefore, that this is that common figure of speech where a part is put for the whole ; for no one, who is not most disingenuous or grossly ignorant, will pretend to say, that administration under one kind was known in the apostolic age.

PHILODOX.

Nay, most of their writers, with Dr. Milner, charge you with “unfairly suppressing” an important proof for communion under one kind ; when St. Paul says, “Whoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” ; where Protestants have “corrupted it by putting the conjunctive AND for the disjunctive OR.”

ORTHODOX.

If this be a Protestant corruption, Protestants have greater antiquity than Romanists would wish to allow. AND is the reading of many MSS. and of the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions. If it be a “corruption”, it is shared by no mean authorities ; by St. Athanasius, St. Clemens of Alexandria, St. Cyril, &c. who all read AND. Neither is OR always “disjunctive.” It is oftentimes conjunctive, and oftentimes explanatory, as in Eph. v. “Fornication, and all uncleanness, OR covetousness.” In

Rom. iii. "What profit hath the Jew, OR what advantage is there of circumcision?" Is it disjunctive in these and the like texts? In fact, those particles are often convertible. Thus the promise to Abraham, in the Septuagint, "I will give to thee, καὶ, AND to thy seed"*, is rendered by St. Paul, "To Abraham, OR to his seed, were the promises made." And the verse in St. Luke xx. "By what authority doest thou these things, OR who gave thee this authority?" is, in the parallel places of St. Matthew and St. Mark, "By what authority doest thou these things, AND who gave thee this authority?"

Little is needed to explain St. Paul's language. He says, "As oft as ye eat this bread, AND drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death until he come." This is the passage where a disjunctive would have been inserted, if the Romish custom be admissible: and in the following, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, AND drink of that cup."—We feel no objection, however, to admit the OR as disjunctive in the passage you quote; because he who profanes either element is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; as he "who offendeth in one point is guilty of all" the law. But it is not possible to avoid something like

* Gen. xvii.

pity, when we see learned men reduced by Church shackles to seek such petty aid.

PHILODOX.

The practice of receiving in one kind, they vindicate by the doctrine of concomitancy; holding, that "the precious body and blood of Christ, being equally and entirely present under one species, is equally and entirely given to the faithful, whichever they receive."

ORTHODOX.

This was a notion, fabricated by Aquinas, of which the Church before knew nothing. Suppose it to be true, did not Christ know this? If it be true for the people, why is it not alike true for the priest? He transubstantiates twice, and receives Christ twice; which is certainly more than was ever commanded.

But it is altogether untrue. Whatever Romanists hold as to the real presence, they attempt not to deny that the Eucharist is a representation of the sacrifice on the cross, and the sacrament of it. But it is a sacrament of Christ's body, not whole and entire, but broken, i. e. dead; separated from the blood, "which is the life". That blood, therefore, which is severed *from* the body, is not con-

joined *to* the body by any figment of concomitancy.

PHILODOX.

They esteem the Eucharist, I repeat, to be a "sacrifice as well as a sacrament."

ORTHODOX.

At any rate, it is a sacrament as well as a sacrifice: else, says Archbishop Laud, "it hath no institution from Christ." But to celebrate the sacrament, is to "shew forth the Lord's death till he come"; which is only shewed forth by "eating this bread AND drinking this cup."

PHILODOX.

Dr. Milner says, "the whole series of ecclesiastical history proves, that the Catholic Church, from the time of the apostles, regarded the receiving under both kinds as a mere matter of discipline."*

ORTHODOX.

It is amazing, that any man, who had regard for decency, should utter such assertions, refuted by the confessions of the best learned of his own communion. The Council of Constance ventured not to defy truth so boldly, as their modern advocates; nor to

* End of Controversy, L. xxxix.

depend so much upon the implicit credulity of their subjects, as to matters of fact: therefore this assembly frankly says, "Notwithstanding Christ instituted the sacrament under both kinds, and the primitive Church so received it", yet, now it shall be a law for all to receive in bread alone; and whoever opposes this, shall be driven out as heretics.— This was daring, but it was honest. They had not the effrontery to affirm, that the Church "always accounted it a mere matter of discipline." To which assertion, without accumulating authorities, the confession of the learned Cardinal Bona may serve for a reply: "At all times and in all places, from the beginning of the Church to the twelfth century, the faithful communicated under the species of bread and wine."* But what need of more than the candid declaration of the Council of Constance; and the straightforward principle of Trent, "Holy Mother Church acknowledges her own authority"?

PHILODOX.

Bishop Milner adds, that Dr. Porteus, Comber, Chemnitius, &c. accuse the former Council of decreeing that, "notwithstanding (for so they express it) our Saviour ministered in both kinds, one only shall, in future, be administered to the laity; as if

* De Reb. Lit. p. 862.

the Council opposed its authority to that of Christ ; whereas it barely defines, that some circumstances of the institution, viz. that it took place after supper, &c. are not obligatory on all Christians.”*

ORTHODOX.

The verity of this may appear by the words of the Council, which are these: “Although Christ instituted after supper, and under both species of bread and wine administered to his disciples, this venerable sacrament ; yet, NOTWITHSTANDING THIS, it ought not to be consecrated after supper, nor received except fasting. And likewise, although, in the primitive Church, the sacrament was received under both species by the faithful, yet this custom, that it shall be received by the laity under the species of bread alone, is to be held for a law, which it is not lawful to reject. And to say that this is unlawful, is erroneous. And those who pertinaciously assert it, are to be driven out as heretics.”† The “NOTWITHSTANDING” refers to both the points stated in the preamble ; as much to receiving “under both species” as to consecrating after supper. And whoever says that this law, repealing the law of Christ, is not lawful, is in an error. And if he persists in saying so, he is to be “driven out” of the

* L. xxxix.

† Sess. XIII.

Church as a heretic. Pray, did this Council “oppose its authority to that of Christ”, or did it not? A Christian is cut off from the body of Christ, for adhering to what his Lord commanded; for believing, that a law which annuls the law of Christ is not lawful. He is a Catholic, if he prefers the ordinance of man to that of God. But, he is a convicted heretic, if he obeys the ordinance of his Redeemer. What! though he plead that the Lord hath said, “drink ye all of this; do this; ye are my disciples, if ye do what I command you,” &c.; his reception will be the same with his who pleaded of old for God and reason against usurped authority: “Dost thou teach us? and they cast him out of the synagogue.”

PHILODOX.

It is argued, that Protestants allow, “in case of necessity, the use of wine may be dispensed with.” But if the cup be an essential part of the sacrament, you can never plead necessity; you may as well baptize without water.

ORTHODOX.

The Council of Trent declares, “bread and wine to be not merely essential, but integral, parts of this sacrament.” That is no sacrament, which is

defective in the essential and integral parts of the institution. The receiving of the cup is an essential and integral part. Water is so essential to baptism, that where there is no water, there is no baptism. Yet Rome accounts that, in some cases, as martyrdom, there is no need of baptism by water. Our Church holds the sacraments to be "generally necessary" to salvation; so necessary, that "where they may be had", no one can disregard them without hazard of salvation. But what can be more unreasonable than to justify neglect of duty, where obvious and practicable, from omission of duty where impracticable? To necessity, there is no law. Where Christ denies the means of obedience, he will not impute the guilt of disobedience. It is not the pencil of divine mercy, but of conscious guilt, that represents God to the sinner's mind as a hard and austere master, "reaping where he hath not sown, and gathering where he hath not strawed."

PHILODOX.

But was it not from respect for the sacrament that the abstraction of the cup took place, to preserve it from the danger of irreverence, as the multitude of communicants increased?

ORTHODOX.

How came it that this irreverence was never thus remedied for twelve centuries, until transubstantiation came up? Are the abuses of men to annul the ordinances of God; and the faithful to be deprived of spiritual food, because the unfaithful trample it under foot? Could any abuses be more gross than those in the Church at Corinth? Yet St. Paul did not attempt to deprive them of their portion of the holy table. Has the number of communicants ever equalled that in the primitive days; when at each assembling of Christians it was administered, and by all received? Moreover, could not our Lord provide against profanation, as well as the Fathers of Constance and Trent? What right has man, under any pretence, to set aside the institution of Christ; and to defraud his neighbour of that spiritual nourishment which the Redeemer hath furnished to sustain the souls of his people, in their weary pilgrimage through a vale of danger and temptation? It were a waste of words to dwell longer upon this. Discussion may obscure, but cannot elucidate, that which is light as day to all who have "their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." You have admitted, that if the Roman Church is proved to err in any one point of faith,

her pretence to infallible direction falls to the ground.

PHILODOX.

The consequence seems unavoidable ; because if she can err in a single matter of faith, the basis of assured dependence is destroyed.

ORTHODOX.

On this point then, to use the forcible language of Bishop Jewel, her heresy may be “ seen, felt, handled with the hands and fingers.” If she had never erred in any thing else, in this she hath erred ; foully and essentially erred. If no other violation of God’s law was proved against her, yet in this she is convicted by her own lips. Here she stands alone in solitary defiance of the ordinance of her Lord, and of Catholic Tradition. It becomes a solemn duty with every one who entrusts his salvation to what Christ hath done and appointed ; and whose eyes are open to behold the truth ; to quit a Church living in barefaced violation, of the divine decree. For it is not simply, that she herself intermits obedience, which would be bad enough ; but that all who “ assert ” and maintain the duty of obeying, and the unlawfulness of disobeying, what Christ hath commanded, are heretics, “ driven out ” from her fold. It is not a topic

on which God is silent, and Rome hath spoken.
But He hath decreed, and she hath forbidden.
What He hath ordained, she hath denounced.
“Whether then it be right to hearken unto her
more than unto God, judge ye.”

DIALOGUE IV.

OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

PHILODOX.

THE Council of Trent asserts, that “ in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is offered unto God”: which is “ one and the same sacrifice as that offered upon the cross : and that the same Christ, who then offered, now also offers, himself, by the ministry of his priests.” They likewise pronounce, that it is “ a sacrifice for the sins, penalties, satisfactions, and other necessities, both of the living and the dead”; and they anathematize those who say, that it ought not “ so to be offered ; that it is only a sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving ; and that it profits the communicant alone.”

ORTHODOX.

This is the most important of the many results of transubstantiation. This is the doctrine which our mild and tolerant Church denounces with greater severity than any of the Romish errors. For whereas she dismisses others of their tenets and practices as “ fond things and vain conceits”, she

declares the sacrifices of the mass to be "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."

PHILODOX.

But by this denunciation she surely proceeds too far : for, upon Roman principles, if there be no sacrifice, there are no priests ; and if no priests, no Church. For their priests are consecrated to offer up sacrifice.

ORTHODOX.

We have nothing to do with these consequences. They must themselves look to the results of their own principles. If they will needs seek their Orders, not from the new covenant, but from the old ; if their priests disdain the apostolical priesthood of ministering God's word and sacraments ; and, in room of offering these spiritual sacrifices, will needs go back to Jerusalem to be fresh installed into the obsolete priesthood of the Jews ; and prefer those carnal ordinances, which were but " weak and beggarly elements", to those which " the coming in of a better hope" constituted ; this is no fault of ours. It is an old adage, that they who will needs be grasping at more than they have a right to, must not murmur to lose what duly belongs to them. " If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who will give you that which is your

own?" And if, in their unhallowed compound of God and Mammon, they have established principles which justly deprive them of the authority rightfully belonging to them, theirs is but a common case; and their example may tend to illustrate a difficult text.

PHILODOX.

But in what sense does your Church go so far as to brand it with the epithet of "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits"?

ORTHODOX.

A *fable* it is, because grounded on no valid authority, but contrary thereto. *Blasphemous* it is, because derogating from that one alone sacrifice, which is all-sufficient for the sins of the whole world; and from the omnipotent wisdom and mercy of God who appointed it: and because it places the eternal sacrifice of the Son of God at the will and pleasure of any frail and sinful mortal who chooses to buy and sell it. A *deceit* it is, because it deludes men with false views of the way of salvation: and *dangerous*, as leading them to carelessness of life, by looking for constant expiations, even after death.

PHILODOX.

In all ages of the world, a notion of vicarious sacrifice has prevailed. Among the heathen, sacrifices were offered. God commanded them to his chosen people. "It would then have been surprising, if the new law had been without one."

ORTHODOX.

Who says it is without a sacrifice? Was it not confirmed and established by that perfect and meritorious sacrifice, of which all the rest were but shadows? By whom has the intent of sacrifice been illustrated and enforced, if not by Protestant writers? There is, in our own days, for instance, one name, certainly not unknown to those of the papal communion; the ornament of the Sister Church, in which, happily for her prosperity, he holds so eminent a station; who has not with more learning and decision advocated the use and meaning of sacrifice, than with diligence and zeal repelled the progress of Romish usurpations.

But were the sacrifices of Jews and Pagans real or figurative only?

PHILODOX.

Real bloody sacrifices they were. But, of course,

not the actual sacrifice of Christ, but figurative and typical of it.

ORTHODOX.

Then why are these sacrifices brought forward, save to waste words and confuse the subject? If bloody, they essentially vary from those of the Roman Church, which are expressly denominated unbloody; and the parallel differs in the distinction of life and death. If figurative, the Anglican Church maintains the like in the Eucharist, and the Roman denies it.

PHILODOX.

But you have no *real* sacrifice. Whereas, the prophet Malachi foretold of the Christian Church, "In every place there shall be sacrifice, and a pure oblation."

ORTHODOX.

We are not contending with them about the word "sacrifice": any devotional service is a sacrifice to God. The breaking of bread and wine is as really an external sacrifice, as the killing and consuming of a beast*. Therefore, their translation, though

* This is the definition of Aquinas: "Sacrificia proprie dicuntur quando circa res Deo oblatas aliquid fit; sicut quod animalia occidebantur et comburebantur; quod panis frangitur et comeditur, et benedicitur; et hoc ipsum nomen sonat. Nam

incorrect, may pass; and we may understand the prophet to declare that the Christian Church shall offer a “sacrifice and pure oblation”, differing from the carnal offerings of the Jews; and he cannot find a better interpreter than St. Paul, who calls the devotion of our mind and body to the divine will a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God”: and designates the doing good to others as those “sacrifices” with which He “is well pleased.”

sacrificium dicitur, ex hoc quod homo facit aliquid sacrum. *Oblatio* autem directe dicitur, cum Deo aliquid offertur, etiam si nihil circa ipsum fiat; sicut dicuntur offerri denarii vel panes in altari circa quos nihil fit. Unde omne sacrificium est oblatio, sed non convertitur. Primitiæ autem oblationes sunt; quia Deo offerebantur, ut legitur Deut. xxvi.: non autem sunt sacrificia, quia nihil sacrum circa eas fiebat. Decimæ autem proprie loquendo non sunt sacrificia, neque oblationes; quia non immediate Deo, sed ministris divini cultus, exhibentur,” 22^e. q. 85. a. iii.—The accuracy of the above admits scarcely of dispute. I the rather quote it to justify myself in alluding to what appears an erroneous practice of some of my reverend Brethren; who, deeming the term “oblations”, in the prayer “for the state of Christ’s Church”, to refer to the sacramental gifts formerly made to the clergy, omit it altogether, as well as the scriptural sentences relating to the same. The latter seems proper; the former improper. The monies now collected, are both “alms” for our poor brethren, “and oblations” to God. But the epithet seems peculiarly to designate the bread and wine which are *offered* unto God *by the priest*; at least, so the Rubric commands.

PHILODOX.

Is such the exposition of the Fathers? Does not Irenæus apply the words to the sacrifice of the mass?

ORTHODOX.

He could not apply it to that of which he knew nothing. Irenæus says distinctly, in speaking of this "pure sacrifice", "Sacrifices do not sanctify the man, but the man the sacrifice." Could this Father mean to say, that the sacrifice of the Son of God did not sanctify the priest, but the priest the sacrifice? Hear also the exposition of Tertullian: "the prophet Malachi, by a pure sacrifice, meant the preaching of the gospel; the offering of a contrite heart; and prayer proceeding from a pure conscience."*

PHILODOX.

Protestant writers derive their main objections to the sacrifice of the mass, from the epistle to the Hebrews. But so far is St. Paul from contradicting it, that Romanists draw a main support from this epistle; as where he quotes Psalm cx. "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." In what did this order consist? How did his sacrifice differ from that of the patriarchs and Jews? "In offering a sacrifice of bread

* See on this topic, Pfaffius in *Fragmenta Irenæi*.

and wine, instead of slaughtered animals; prefiguring the sacrifice which Christ would institute in the same elements." This is the interpretation of the Fathers*.

ORTHODOX.

Had the Roman Church deeply studied this epistle, with intent to fabricate a system which should expressly contradict the argument of it, both in letter and spirit, it would be difficult to say, how they could have done this more effectually than by the sacrifice of the mass.

The Jewish priests were ordained to offer some animal to God; shedding the blood to make reconciliation for the errors of the people. St. Paul affirms these sacrifices all terminated in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross; who, thereby annulling the order of Aaron, brought into its room the order of Melchisedec. Of this order, he expressly declares there was but one priest; neither, indeed, could be; since the priests of the Melchisedecan order must be "without beginning of days, and end of life, abiding eternally"; which characters compete to Christ alone:—and as one priest, so could there be only one sacrifice. He argues, that, under the law were many priests in succession, death compelling it so to be, by removing them

* End of Controversy, L. XL.

one after another: and many daily sacrifices, because each was incomplete, imperfect, and of no inherent virtue to atone for sin. And in this, he places the distinction between the old and the new dispensation. The gospel needed not many priests nor many sacrifices; one priest being constituted, not obnoxious to the sentence of mortality, “after the power of an endless life, abiding for ever”, and so “of the order of Melchisedec.” He offered up “once for all”, one all-sufficient sacrifice. And as if foreseeing the future corruption of the truth, the apostle states all this again and again, repeating epithets upon epithets to enforce it. Christ “was ONCE offered”; “ONCE FOR ALL”; he entered in ONCE into the holy place; as “the worshippers were ONCE purged, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin” to be offered; “we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Christ ONCE FOR ALL”; “by ONE offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified”; and “having offered ONE sacrifice for sins, he sat down for ever at the right hand of God”; therefore not to be brought back daily to be offered again and again in a thousand places.

Can language be more explicit? Can human comment give force to the divine assertion? Has ever Protestant more pointedly and directly re-

elled the falsehood of the Roman doctrine ? The order of Melchisedec, the gospel priesthood, hath but ONE alone priest ; but ONE alone sacrifice ; offered up at one time only.—Here, again, it is not simply that Rome hath spoken where scripture is silent ; but she hath declared one thing, and Christ another. It is not, therefore, as she would have you believe, that you are to receive her testimony to supply the deficiency, or elucidate the obscurity, of holy writ ; but you must admit her paramount authority to annul or refute the word of God. Hence, her deep-rooted abhorrence to the circulation of the scriptures in any translation, or with any comment.—Whilst the Anglican Church claims a due respect, as an authorized expounder of the sacred oracles, the Roman Church assumes an infallible right of superseding them ; not merely as defective, but, in point of fact, altogether useless ; and, she might boldly add, “ erroneous.” For, most assuredly, if she be right, the inspired theologist of the Hebrews is wrong. No interpretation can ever reconcile him with the Roman creed. St. Paul affirms, “ The new law can have but one priest.” Rome ; “ The new law hath MANY priests.” St. Paul ; “ There is no succession in the new priesthood.” Rome ; “ There is a perpetual succession.” St. Paul ; “ The sacrifice was but once offered, and

once for all." Rome ; " The sacrifice is offered many times, even DAILY." St. Paul ; " Those who are sanctified, are sanctified by the one offering once offered." Rome ; " Those who are sanctified, are not sanctified but by constant repetition of the one sacrifice." It is unnecessary to proceed with the parallel. Enough has been said to evince the utter irreconcilableness of the two tenets.

Few words, therefore, are requisite to shew the end and purpose of the apostle in introducing the case of Melchisedec. He makes the resemblance between his priesthood and that of Christ to consist in this :—that both began and terminated in one priest ; that we hear of Melchisedec once and no more ; that he was, like Christ, king of righteousness, and king of peace ; that his generation is not declared, " having neither father nor mother, beginning of days, nor end of life " ; that his priesthood was " unchangeable", ἀπαράβατον, passing not from one to another ; having no succession : herein differing as well from the priesthood of Aaron, as from that assumed by Rome. The portrait keeps its eye upon Christ only.

That Melchisedec " brought forth bread and wine", when Abraham returned from battle, we read ; that he " made a sacrifice thereof", we read not. The bread and wine were produced to re-

fresh the patriarch and his wearied forces ; as Josephus, St. Jerome, &c. understand it.—But be it that Melchisedec *did offer* a sacrifice : what was it that he offered ? “ Bread and wine.” This then it seems is the identity of the Melchisedecan and Roman priesthood : he offered real and substantial bread and wine ; and they do NOT offer them. He did NOT offer the body of Christ ; and they DO offer it. To resist a parallel so obvious, is certainly a proof of very extraordinary obtuseness of intellect, or of pertinacious adherence to heresy. Nay, we are even so incorrigibly blind or perverse, as to fancy, that the sacrifice of Melchisedec may be rather identified with our Eucharistic sacrifice than with theirs. He offered bread and wine ; so do we ; and so do not the Romanists. He offered not the real body of Christ, but a representation ; neither do we offer the Lord’s body, but a commemoration thereof : the Romanists offer NOT a representation, but the real body.

PHILODOX.

They speak of it as a sacrifice of bread and wine ; because, under the appearances of these, Christ is offered.

ORTHODOX.

Their writers on this topic are unintelligible, or

inconsistent; for either it is a sacrifice of bread and wine, or it is not. If *it is* a sacrifice of bread and wine, it is not the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ: it is not an “unchangeable”, but an ever changing sacrifice; since every single mass consists of fresh bread and fresh wine. It is not a real or propitiatory sacrifice; bread and wine having no efficacy to expiate for transgression. It “is not possible” that these viands, any more than the “blood of bulls and of goats, can take away sin.” Memorial sacrifices the one and the other might be; but expiatory sacrifices neither of them were, nor could be.—If it is *not* a sacrifice of bread and wine, it is not that which Melchisedec offered.

If Christ is offered, under the “appearances of bread and wine”, he is really and truly offered; and therefore St. Paul must be refuted before we can receive this faith.—But, perhaps, it will be more satisfactory to know in what they make a sacrifice to consist.

PHILODOX.

Their writers state, that to constitute a sacrifice, it is required, that there be some sensible thing to be offered; and that sensible thing to be immolated.

ORTHODOX.

And to this, the sacrifice of the mass answers not in a single point. I. The thing to be offered must be “*res sensibilis*”, as Bellarmin remarks,—something evident to the senses. In this sacrifice there is nothing evident to the senses. The bread and wine are not present; but the accidents only. The body and blood of Christ, which are the things offered, are *said* to be present, but inevident to sense. It seems then, that as in a sacrifice there must be something visibly present, this is fully accomplished in the mass, where either there is not any thing visibly present, or the thing present is different from the thing sacrificed.

II. To a proper sacrifice, the death of the victim, by the very act of sacrificing, “*per occisionem in ipso actu sacrificandi*”*, is essential. In the mass, the supposed sacrifice is Christ. But “he dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him”; his body cannot be destroyed nor killed. Therefore there is no real sacrifice.

PHILODOX.

But the immolation is said to be “mystical”, and performed by consecrating the elements; and the sacrifice is not bloody, but unbloody.

* Bellarmin de Miss.

ORTHODOX.

A “mystical” immolation is not a “*real*” immolation, but figurative only; and therefore their sacrifice is not a real, but a figurative sacrifice. Vain then is the distinction of bloody and unbloody. “Where a covenant is, there must be, of necessity, the death of the confirmer, τοῦ διαθεμένου”. If to a sacrifice immolation be necessary, where there is only a figurative immolation, as in the consecration of the bread and wine, there can only be a figurative sacrifice. St. Paul insists, that Christ CANNOT be offered MANY TIMES. And wherefore? Because then “he must often have suffered”: which cannot be. He points out a gross moral incongruity even in the notion of such a thing, by a very solemn comparison: “as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment”; as sinners undergo but at one time *one* death, the punishment of sin, and one judgment at *one* great day for all offences; “so Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many.”

From the real sacrifice of Christ, expiation is inseparable; therefore they pretend that their sacrifice is expiatory for the sins of living and dead. But to expiate for sin, there must be actual shedding of blood;—“it is the blood”, saith God, “that maketh an atonement for the soul”; and, “without shedding of blood is no remis-

sion.”* Either then the blood of Christ is shed, or no expiatory sacrifice offered. “Where”, saith St. Paul, “remission of sins and iniquities is, there is no more offering for sin”. The merit of the sacrifice on the cross depends solely on the compact between the Father and the Son. By the same was it ordained, before the foundations of the world were laid, that this Lamb should be offered, to take away the sins of the world, upon the cross. In this everlasting priesthood, the same was victim and sacrificer. The only priest who is qualified to offer real sacrifice for sin is such an one as “is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” When they will produce a sacrificer thus qualified to make atonement, we will allow more weight to their arguments for the reality of the sacrifice.

PHILODOX.

They place the immolation or act of sacrifice in three things : I. “By sacerdotal consecration of the Eucharist, a profane thing becomes sacred ; for earthly bread becomes the body of Christ.” II. It is “offered to God when, by force of consecration, it is placed upon the altar ; for to put the victim on the altar is to offer it to God.” III. It is consummated, or destroyed, when the priest re-

* Lev. xvii. Heb. ix.

ceives in both kinds. Thus they shew, that the mass is a real sacrifice ; in which a thing profane becomes sacred, is offered to God upon the altar, and truly and really destroyed *.

ORTHODOX.

I. Can Christian ears bear to receive, that the body of Christ is a “ sacred thing made from a profane one ”, by consecration ? If they can, transubstantiation may then be said to have relation to a miracle, but to a sacrifice it has none whatever. Neither is this essential part of a sacrifice fulfilled, unless the selfsame sacred thing be offered and immolated. II. The offering a thing upon the altar is not the act of sacrificing, but preliminary to it. And the gospel knows of no altar upon which Christ might be offered, except the cross. III. Where do we ever read that a sacrifice is immolated by eating it ? Where did God appoint that his blessed Son should be sacrificed by eating Him ? Who can suppose that eating is the same as sacrificing ? If it be, the sacrificial part belongs to the communicants as well as to the priests : since, as we are told, Christ is “ taken entire under either species.”

PHILODOX.

Dr. Milner teaches, that “ the victim is immo-

* Bellarmin de Miss.

lated in the mass, by the symbolical disunion or separate consecration of the body and the blood."

ORTHODOX.

If the body and blood be only symbolically disunited, then it is only a symbolical, not a real and proper, sacrifice. "Surely the very stones will speak", sooner than we shall receive these self-contradicting tenets. When we argue with them about withholding the cup from the laity, they stoutly maintain, that Christ is whole and entire in each species by *inseparable* concomitancy. If this be so, the words of the priest are empty and unmeaning; a true separation is obstructed by this inseparable adherence of the body and blood; and, necessarily, the very act of sacrificing is obstructed, and no sacrifice at all takes place. Bellarmin abandons this notion, perceiving how perfectly untenable it is.

Upon this absurd and most unchristian basis, Rome is content to rest her priesthood.

PHILODOX.

But, upon your own ground, that you offer up a commemorative sacrifice, proper priests are required; and to this purpose your clergy are ordained.

ORTHODOX.

If by "priests" you mean "sacrificers", we re-

ject the office, as Jewish and Pagan. Our priests are what the etymology of the term implies ; what the primitive commission designates, and our Prelates in the laying on of hands convey ;—Elders of the Church of Christ. To commemorate the one great sacrifice, to offer up spiritual services, to bind and loose according to the divine law, requires not sacrificial priests, but ministers of the word and sacraments. To do what Christ did is impossible ; to carry on what he perfected, would have been useless. To attempt the one or the other is unauthorized usurpation ; profane intrusion into the office of Him, who “ trod the winepress of his Father’s wrath alone ; and of the people there was none with him.”

It was not for a light purpose, that the Roman builders upreared this baseless fabric. This is their practical religion. This is that sacrifice of the mass, which atones for the sins of the living and the dead ; which may be bought for money, and applied by any priest. It is propitiatory ; therefore it pacifies God. It is expiatory ; therefore it blots out sin. It is the substitute for satisfactions, penances, and so on. It confers grace by the mere act ; not dependent upon the frame of mind of the penitent ; for the dead, at least, to whom its virtue extends, can put no moral obstruction in the way.

It is efficacious for those who are named at every mass ; for those who attend ; for whomever the offerer pleases. Christ once offered himself voluntarily on the cross. But here his will is fettered ; he hath chained himself to the good pleasure of each and all the priests in the world ; and his expiation and propitiation rest upon their intention and disposition.

PHILODOX.

In objecting to the doctrine which teaches that the sacrifice confers grace by the mere act of celebration, you seem to make the merit of Christ's sacrifice depend on the will of the communicant.

ORTHODOX.

They tell you, that this sacrifice is an application of Christ's sacrifice on the cross ; but if applicatory, it is dependent on the state of mind of the person to whom applied. If they deny this, they plead guilty to the accusations so loudly raised against them, of confounding all distinctions between piety and impiety. Be an offering intrinsically ever so acceptable, it is not accepted unless it be presented by an acceptable offerer. God " had respect to Abel and to his offering " ; to Abel first, and then to his offering. The small and insignificant mites of the widow were accepted, when the ostentatious

gifts of the Pharisees were despised. The sacrifice of Christ was accepted, from the infinite merit of the offerer. Had it been offered merely from the disposition of the human agents, it had certainly availed nothing to our salvation. To expiate sin, the offerer, the offering, and the motive, must be adequate to the purpose. Had not all these concurred in the glorious sacrifice of the cross, it had been of little worth ; for these qualities abstracted, the death of Christ must have been a horrid action in the sight of the Almighty : as their own Scriptures, speaking of him who robs the poor to make an offering, declares him to be as hateful to God, as “ one that killeth a son before his father’s eyes.”*

PHILODOX.

Christ is the immediate, the Priest only the mediate, offerer ; and the sacrifice is accepted for the sake of the immediate offerer. But, indeed, if you deny acceptance to an offering, where the offerer is not free from guilt, you deny acceptance to every service which a vicious minister pays on the part of his congregation.

ORTHODOX.

The inconclusiveness of this inference is apparent. Every service offered to the Father, by or for sinful

* Ecclus. xxxiv.

man, is only acceptable to him as far as it is offered through the mediation of his Son. But this mass-sacrifice is not offered through Christ, but directly to the Father. Other services pretend neither to be meritorious nor expiatory ; but derive their fitness from the disposition of him in or for whom they are offered ; and all their worth from the abundant merit of the great Intercessor.

When they argue that our Lord immediately offers himself by the priest, they deny what at other times they urge. For, to escape contradicting St. Paul, they allege, that Christ did NOT offer himself immediately. Clear also is it, that if he offers himself through the priest, he offers himself not immediately. But if he offer himself mediately, then is not he the immediate offerer, but the priest : and in fact, this whole sacrifice depends upon the will and intention of the priest, so entirely, that as no one can read the human heart, no one can know whether the sacrifice be really offered or not. The priest, therefore, being the immediate offerer, the worth of the offering depends upon him.

PHILODOX.

But surely, if the king authorize his ambassador to bestow a present, the worth of it is derived not from the ambassador, but from the monarch.

ORTHODOX.

What an ambassador does in the name of the king, the king himself may do. But Christ can no more sacrifice himself; therefore, not by deputy. Did any one ever hear of a king needing the aid of his ambassador, to introduce him into his own court? Christ is at once the offering and the king. Does the immaculate and eternal High Priest want the assistance of a mortal to introduce him into the presence of his everlasting Father?

But the question of the worth of this supposed sacrifice will be understood by a more applicable comparison. If the king, in his absence, gives to his viceroy power of conferring honours, free pardons, &c. upon whomever he will; every person so honored, and every culprit so pardoned, refers the merit and the debt of gratitude, not remotely to his sovereign, but directly to him upon whose fiat it is suspended; and from whom it immediately flows. Hence the tendency of this sacrifice of the mass is to withdraw the devotee from the Saviour, the remote bestower of the benefit, to the priest, upon whose will it depends; to detach him from the all-sufficient, but distant sacrifice upon the cross, to this present sacrifice, this atonement of the actual sins which press upon his mind, this infallible application of the former offering.

PHILODOX.

They treat it as a calumny to say, that they account this sacrifice to be efficacious, without regard to the character or disposition of the person for whose benefit it is bestowed.

ORTHODOX.

The calumny is their own. Their Church has taught again and again, that the mere performance of the work confers grace. It is readily admitted, that certain of their divines do require great purity of mind for the reception of this sacrament; that many of their books of preparation are admirably adapted to edify and comfort; and many of their devotional treatises contain beautiful and humble addresses to the Saviour; although, I must add, I have scarcely met with one, in which my mind has not been shocked with the irreverent amalgamation of the Creator and the creature, the Redeemer and the redeemed. The devotional books, published by their private divines, also, are far less objectionable, and more instructive than their authorized ones; for unseemly in the extreme are the greater part of those works, which bear the seal of Infallibility upon them.

We are, too, discussing the doctrine of the Church; not resorting to the feelings and conduct of private teachers. Now the sacrifice of the mass

is, and must be, as they expound it in the words of Dr. Milner, "the most sacred and essential part of their services"; the "most sublime and excellent act of religion which man can offer to his Creator." Be the offerer who he may, therefore, the most welcome of all sacred duties is performed to God. A man procures a mass to be said; and, by so doing, be he ever so vile, he performs a service "the most acceptable to his Creator." And be it, that whilst he lives, his immorality may put some obstacle to the effect of this, (which it is not clear how it can possibly do,) yet when he is dead, and his legacy procures constant masses to be said for his soul, his immorality can no longer cast a stumbling-block in the way; he is beyond the power of sinning more. There is daily offered up for him, and through him, the "most acceptable offering" that the Creator can receive: an offering in itself of all-sufficient merit, expiatory and propitiatory for the sins and offences of the person for whom it is offered; for the removing of all penalties, satisfactions, &c. as the Council of Trent teaches; and very consistently. For it cannot be that an infinite satisfaction should not be infinitely satisfactory, where there is no disqualification in the way.

Is it possible that such a doctrine should be other than a fruitful source of impiety and vice?

derogating from the infinite and alone sacrifice of the cross ; turning man from the Creator to the creature ; from the Intercessor in heaven to the intercessor on earth ; from practical holiness of life, from “ working out his own salvation with fear and trembling”, to a dependence on the work of others : leading him to live in the lust of his inclinations here, with the hope, and, in fact, the positive assurance of an all-sufficient sacrifice being daily applied for him after death, provided he hath wherewith to purchase it.

PHILODOX.

But the general mercies of God are of little value to us unless specifically applied. The particular sacrifice of the mass is an application of the sacrifice of the cross, as you have, indeed, remarked.

ORTHODOX.

But if so, it is not one and the same sacrifice with that of the cross. A sacrifice is one thing, and the application of it another. The application of the sacrifice of the cross is not by attempting a renewal of it, but by faith in it. “ God”, says St. Paul, “ hath set forth his Son to be a propitiation”, not through daily iteration of the same, but “ through faith in his blood.”

The baneful issues of this tenet are innumerable. But as I wish not to occupy you so much with the practical results of their doctrines, as with the untenableness of them, we will only advert to one or two that are inherent in the thing. The most prominent of all are Private Masses. Were these things heard of for ages? Would not the primitive believers have excommunicated any one who had practised such preposterous absurdities? They allowed but one altar in a church; and one Eucharist at the same time; nor does there appear an example of the contrary earlier than the age of Gregory I. Where were the many altars in the same edifice; and the many masses going on at the same time; bearing more resemblance to the incantations of wizards, than to the edifying symbols of Christian love? That contradiction in terms, solitary communion, was unknown till this sacramental trafficking came up. The words of their missal revolt against this practice. The epithet "mass" bears on its front a refutation of the use to which it is prostituted; their best writers agreeing, that from the "*missa catechumenorum*", (the dismissal from Church of all who did not receive,) the popular name, mass, *missa* (used, in the corruption of the Latin language, for "*missio*, *demissio*; as *remissa*, *pro remissio*,") was derived to the Eucharist; at

which now all remain to gaze*. In fact, every ancient term significative of the holy sacrament, remonstrates against the vain pageant which Rome has made of it. It is most commonly called "synaxis", the gathering together; because a main object of religious convention was to receive the symbols of their general Lord. It is especially a "feast"; a "banquet." But is that a "feast" at which the keeper of the house regales alone, and the guests stand vacant lookers on? It is a "communion", a participation; but no one participates, no one communicates. The priest does all, and for all. He expiates for all; receives for all; eats and drinks for all. And this is Christian communion. The service itself proclaims that the people offer, pray, receive, &c. which is manifestly untrue. Yet still "Mother Church" stalks on, in her old incorrigible, perverse way; notwithstanding the commands of holy writ; the censure of primitive tradition; the opposition of Fathers and councils; the remonstrances of the missal and canon itself.

* Roman writers are not precisely agreed in the distinction between solitary and private masses. I use the terms indiscriminately to signify the mere receiving of the priest: they differ in shades of absurdity only, and are alike alien to scripture and tradition.

PHILODOX.

They maintain, that private masses were always lawful and practised; quoting the apostles who “brake bread from house to house”, and their successors, who celebrated in houses, prisons, &c.

ORTHODOX.

If by “private masses” were meant the celebrating the communion in private houses to the sick, in prison to the captives, &c., this is not the thing reprehended; for all Churches practise it. But the private masses we denounce are the common masses, when the priest alone receives; which, though done in the face of the congregation, are as truly private, as the mental prayer of a preacher before he commences his sermon, is as really a private prayer as that which he offers in his closet.

PHILODOX.

I used the term to signify the solitary receiving of the priest.

ORTHODOX.

Then the assertion is contradicted by all evidence; and the examples quoted by them are sufficient to shew, how utterly impossible it is to produce even a shadow of testimony in its favour. Their divines would do better to cleave to “Holy Mother Church

acknowledges her own authority in the administration of the sacraments."

I. The apostles practised not private masses ; for of the institution of Christ, participation is an integral point ; and their theologists are compelled to allow, that to make up this sacrament, three things are necessary ; consecration, oblation, communion. Thus the commentator on the mass, Biel, remarks, " To this end the body and blood of Christ is consecrated, that the faithful may use them by eating." The solitary receiving by the priest is not of the institution of Christ. " Take YE : eat YE. Drink YE ALL of this." Such is the commandment ; and the sacrament rests herein.

II. " The apostles brake bread from house to house"; therefore it is lawful for the priest to receive alone. The premises and conclusion hang together as coherently as truth and falsehood. In the dawn of the gospel, the only churches were private houses ; as " the Church in the house of Nymphas", of Philemon, &c. Mark the sacred narrative of what happened on the first Christian Pentecost ; and what support private masses derive from this "breaking bread from house to house." The three thousand converts " continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers": and " THEY, breaking bread from house

to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart." Had we quoted these texts against private masses, they had been, methinks, somewhat more to the purpose.

PHILODOX.

But there is added an authority from Tertullian*, "if you cannot assemble in the daytime, you have the night: celebrate it in the night privately, even if three alone be present."

ORTHODOX.

So then, because Tertullian directs Christians, in time of persecution, when they cannot have a full congregation, to celebrate in a small assembly, even though not more than three be present; therefore it is lawful, in times of prosperity, when all the congregation are convened, for the priest to celebrate alone. I should have supposed the inference from Tertullian to have been of this kind: "If, even in times of persecution, it is not lawful for the priest to celebrate without three communicants, at the least; how much less is it allowable when no such necessity obstructs."

To produce examples reprehending this practice would be endless. Remember the language of one

* De Fuga in Persec. c. 14.

of the most eminent apostles of Rome, St. Francis; who, writing to the priests of his own order, testifies his view of the subject, and what was in his time the practice of the Church of Rome herself. “ I admonish and exhort you in the Lord, that, in whatever places the brethren tarry, one mass alone in a day be celebrated, *according to the form of the holy Roman Church*. But if in any place there be many priests, by the love of charity, let each priest be content with hearing the celebration of another.” Can words be more decisive than the solemn language of this saint, exhorting and entreating them in the Lord, and by the love of charity, to adhere to the form of the Romish Church, not to have more than one mass, and one priest officiating in one day in the same place? Either St. Francis, “ in the name of the Lord ”, grossly belies the Church; or she now practises what she then accounted unlawful.

PHILODOX.

I believe their ablest writers admit that private masses crept in through the lukewarmness and ind devotion of the people.

ORTHODOX.

True; and the words of Cardinal Bona are very

instructive on this point (p. 176): “ The tenor of the mass itself, and the practice of the ancient Church evince, that from the beginning the sacrifice was chiefly so instituted, that it should be publicly and solemnly celebrated, the clergy and the people standing by, offering and communicating. For all the prayers, and the very words of the canon, are in the plural number, and as in the name of many. Hence the priest invites the people to pray, saying, ‘ Let us pray ’; and saluting the same, says ‘ The Lord be with you.’ Then the faithful, being admonished to lift up their hearts to God, respond, ‘ WE lift them up unto the Lord.’ Hence also in the canon, he always prays in the name of the people collected together, as when he says, ‘ WE supplicants pray and implore’, &c. ‘ WE offer this oblation of thy whole family, to thy glorious majesty, that AS MANY OF US as, by participation of this altar, shall take the sacred body and blood of thy Son’, &c. and much more of the same kind: whence it is clear, that the mass is nothing else than the action of the priest, and of the whole assembly: and that many persons stood round it, is indicated by these words,—‘ and of all who stand around, whose faith and devotion are known to thee ’; which words cannot be wrested otherwise. To the communion of the bystanders those words

refer, in which the priest implores God that the body and blood of the Lord may be for eternal life to *all who receive*. And after communion, he says, ‘What we have taken with our mouth, may we receive in a pure mind: thou hast satisfied thy family with sacred gifts.’ And almost all the prayers which are recited after the communion, are of the same tenor; because indeed those alone were present at the mass, who could offer, and participate of the sacrament. Hence St. Cyprian and Pope Leo make mention of the people communicating; and the tenth canon of the apostles, and the second of the Council of Antioch under Julius I., decree, that all the faithful who come to church shall communicate, and those who refuse shall be ejected from the church and excommunicated. ‘Be it known’, says Micrologus, ‘that communicants alone were accustomed to be present at the divine mysteries’: hence, before the oblation, the catechumens and penitents who had not yet prepared themselves to communicate, were commanded, according to the canon, to depart. The very consecration of the sacraments also implies this; in which the priest prays not only for his own oblation and communion, but also for that of the others; and especially in the prayer after communion, he seems to pray for the communicants alone. It cannot properly be

called a communion except many partake of the same sacrifice.' This was the custom of the first believers, which St. Jerome testifies to have prevailed at Rome in his time."—Can words more fully exhibit the gross contempt of Catholic tradition manifested by his own church, than this enforced statement of the learned cardinal.

But it seems the custom arose "from the lukewarmness and indevotion of the people";—an admirable foundation for the universal practice of the Church!—How came it to be so general? so sanctioned? From the crown of the head even to the foot, were all converts to the impiety of the people? did the clergy, regular and secular; monks and friars; bishops, priests, and deacons; primates, cardinals, and popes; all chime in with the indevotion of the people; and shape a religion to suit the temperament of a profane community; authorizing it by their practice; and establishing it in their churches, cathedrals, colleges, monasteries, and every department of religion? was the whole faith conformed to suit an irreligious and superstitious laity?

PHILODOX.

The evil was so general, it could, perhaps, be scarcely repressed.

ORTHODOX.

Did they make the attempt? Did they “reprove, rebuke, and exhort”? Is it the duty of ministers and prelates, popes and councils, to accord with the infidelity of the people,—when they choose not to follow sound doctrine? This is a strange way of refuting error and restoring truth. Besides, how came the Church so readily to comply with the corruptions of the populace? This was not her usual practice. She was wont to curse, anathematize, excommunicate; and make the universe ring with the injuries done to the faith. Her custom was, to dragoon heretics into the right way; by dint of fire and sword; interdict and inquisition; bell, book, and candle. Her unwonted gentleness, and ready conformity to the wishes of the people in this case, seem to argue that she rather promoted than discouraged the innovation; and that her eye was fixed upon some benefit to accrue to herself, which might more than remedy the injury resulting therefrom.

PHILODOX.

But they consider the Eucharist to be a sacrifice; and if the people will not attend, still it is the duty of the priest to offer it.

ORTHODOX.

I must really be excused going over the ground again, having already proved, even upon their own interpretation of the word sacrifice, how vain is this pretence. But granting that it were a sacrifice, still it may not be offered otherwise than Christ instituted. And of his institution, participation is an integral part; else no communion of the body of Christ; and where no communion, neither Christian sacrifice nor sacrament. Whilst they accuse the ind devotion of the people, they but attempt to shift their own guilt upon the shoulders of the innocent. Communion is not only discouraged, but virtually forbid. It cannot consist with what they have made of this ordinance.

PHILODOX.

Has not every Church the power of altering the rites and circumstances of the sacraments?

ORTHODOX.

Doubtless, in non-essentials; to see "all things done decently and in order, as time and place may require", and conformably with the divine laws. But to alter, in essential parts, the institution of Christ, not any Church hath power. Yet this hath Rome claimed and exercised. Take the holy evangelists into your closet. Look at the Eucha-

rist as it issued from the Redeemer's hands ; a rite how simple, expressive, instructive, lovely ! Compare it with the gaudy shew of Rome ; converted into a source and fountain of idolatry, superstition, and fraud ; of " blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." In what particle hath it not been garbled, corrupted, falsified ?

I will not weary your patience longer in this discussion, than to direct your attention to the forcible appeal addressed by our learned, eloquent, and pious Bishop Jewell, to the Romanists of his day.

" O that St. Paul were now alive and saw the behaviour and order of the priest at their mass ? Think ye that he would take and account it for the Lord's supper ? When he had espied but one fault in the holy communion amongst the Corinthians, straightway he rebuked them, and called them back to Christ's institution. ' This', saith he, ' I received of the Lord, and the same I gave over unto you '. But if he saw the disorder that we have seen, would he not pull us back to the institution of Christ, as he did them ? Would he not say unto us, Did I ever teach you to minister the holy communion in a strange language ? Did I ever teach you to receive the communion privately to yourselves alone, and so to disdain and despise your brethren ? Did I ever teach you to minis-

ter the communion in one kind ? Did I ever teach you to offer up the Son of God unto his Father ? Did I ever teach you any other propitiatory sacrifice for sin than that Christ once offered upon the cross ? Did I ever teach you to minister the Lord's supper, wherein the people should nothing else but look on and behold your doings, without any kind of knowledge or comfort ? Did I ever teach you to lift the sacrament over your head ? Did I ever teach the people to fall down thereunto, and to worship they know not what ? Be these the things that I delivered you ? Be these the things that I received of the Lord ? This would St. Paul say unto us, where he now alive. Thus would he reprove us, and call us to the standard and original of the first appointing of this holy sacrament.

. O that our adversaries, and all that stand in defence of the mass this day, would content themselves to be judged by this rule ! That in all the controversies that lie between us and them, they would remit the judgment unto God's word ! so should we soon agree and join together ; so should we deliver nothing unto the people but that we have received at God's hand. And if there be any that have had, or yet have, any good opinion of the mass, I beseech you for God's sake, even as ye tender your own salvation, suffer not your-

selves wilfully to be led away ; run not blindly to your own confusion. Think with yourself ; it was not for nought that so many of your brethren rather suffered themselves to die and to abide all manner of extremity and cruelty, than they would be partakers of that thing you reckon to be so holy. Let their death, let their ashes, let their blood that was so abundantly shed before your eyes, somewhat prevail with you and move you. Be not ruled by your wilful affections. Ye have a good mind and zeal towards God. Have it according unto the knowledge of God. The Jews had a zeal of God ; and yet they crucified the Son of God. Search the scriptures : there shall ye find everlasting life. There shall ye learn to judge yourself, and your own doings, that ye be not judged of the Lord. If ever it happen you to be present again at the mass, think but thus with yourself ; What make I here ? What profit have I of my doings ? I hear nothing ; I understand nothing ; I am taught nothing ; I receive nothing. Christ bade me take ; I take nothing. Christ bade me eat ; I eat nothing. Christ bade me drink ; I drink nothing. Is this the institution of Christ ? Is this the Lord's supper ? Is this the right use of the holy mysteries ? Is this it that Paul delivered unto me ? Is this it that Paul re-

ceived of the Lord ?—Let us but say thus unto ourselves, and no doubt God of his mercy will open our hearts ; we shall see our errors, and content ourselves to be ordered by the wisdom of God ; to do that God will have us to do ; to believe that God will have us to believe ; to worship that God will have us to worship. So shall we have comfort of the holy mysteries ; so shall we receive the benefits of Christ's death ; so shall we be partakers of Christ's body and blood ; so shall Christ truly dwell in us, and we in Him ; so shall all error be taken from us ; so shall we join all together in God's truth ; so shall we all be able, with one heart and one spirit, to know and to glorify the only, the true, and the living God, and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ ; to whom both, with the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

DIALOGUE V.

OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

ORTHODOX.

THE further we proceed in our discussions, the clearer shall we perceive that the discordancy on the great question of justification involves almost every tenet at issue ; and that “ the doctrine of MERIT and the doctrine of DUTY, lie at the very root of the differences between the Church of Rome and the Church of England.”* This becomes more apparent in considering the pretended sacrament of penance ; the basis of which is laid in the power of man to satisfy the justice of God. It is, moreover, one of the most intricate topics of theology, arising as well from the nature of the questions included in it, as from the confused mode of viewing the parts unconnectedly. We must not trust to the statements of their writers ; for as the practical consequences of this tenet produced the Reformation, more than usual caution and concealment has been employed about it.

* Faber’s Difficulties of Romanism, p. 172.

PHILODOX.

Among the decrees of the Council of Trent, it is defined, that penance is a sacrament instituted by Christ, when he breathed on his apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained." By virtue of which commission, they affirm that a priest, living "in the guilt of mortal sin, may, by virtue of the Holy Spirit given in ordination, exercise this office of remitting and retaining sins." This sacrament was ordained for the remission of sins committed after baptism; as "a remedy of life", and to apply to the sinner the benefit of Christ's death. The *matter* of it consists in contrition, confession, and satisfaction; and the *form*, in which the force chiefly lies, in these words, "I absolve thee"; for the prayers added, "do not belong to the essence of the form, nor are necessary to the administration of the sacrament itself."

ORTHODOX.

Why is auricular confession of the *matter* of this sacrament?

PHILODOX.

Because, as the Council states, our Lord, in the institution of this sacrament, "instituted an entire confession of sins; which confession is, by divine

command, necessary to all who sin after baptism ; for our Lord, when he was going to ascend, left the priests his vicars, as presidents and judges, before whom all mortal sins shall be brought, in order that, by the power of the keys for remitting or retaining sins, they might pronounce sentence." They declare the confessor's chair to be a "tribunal, before which the lapsed are to be set as criminals, that, by the sentence of the priest, they may be delivered from their sins." And this confession must not be general, but minute. It is, therefore, ordered, that "penitents must recount all mortal sins, even the most secret, of which, after diligent meditation, they are conscious, and all the particular circumstances which alter the nature of the sin." And this, because "the priest could not pass sentence without knowing the case, nor inflict equitable punishment, if penitents declare their sins generally, and not specifically or particularly." To this, as to every other sacrament, the intention of the priest to do what the Church intends to be done, is requisite. The Council denounces anathema to all who deny to the priests this power of loosing and retaining sins : anathema to those who deny that absolution is a judicial act, and affirm it to be merely ministerial : anathema to those who deny auricular confession to be, by divine command,

necessary to salvation, or that it is, by divine command, necessary to reveal every mortal sin, which can, with diligent premeditation, be called to mind, with the circumstances, &c.: anathema to him who says, that sins are remitted to the penitent, if the priest absolves, not in earnest, but feignedly. The Church also warns penitents "not so to flatter themselves concerning their own faith, as to think they are absolved truly, and before God, when the priest has not a mind to act seriously, and absolve truly."*

ORTHODOX.

To all which, that Trent assemblage had the amazing effrontery to add, that "this sacramental confession had been used by Holy Church from the beginning, and always commended by the most holy and ancient Fathers"; than which (their own writers being judges), a more direct contempt of truth was scarcely ever uttered by any man or body of men. Time would fail to enter largely into this pretended sacrament. If the Council of Trent, by the mere exposition, hath not sufficiently exposed it to the rejection of every one who presumes to think for himself, it seems almost useless to allege testimony. Those who can infer that when our

* Sess. 14.

Lord said the above quoted words, he made a sacrament, of which contrition, confession, and satisfaction are the matter ; absolution the form ; and the priest intending to do what the Church intends, the person ; and restoration to faith the benefit ; and all to be believed and obeyed, under risk of salvation : whoever can infer this, I say, from our Lord's words, it really seems hard to say, what he may not infer.

For as to the *matter*. All are agreed that every sacrament must have a visible element, an outward symbol, for its matter. But here is no element. "*Contrition*" is invisible : how can it then be of the matter of a sacrament. "*Confession*" is no element ; it is not visible ; and so far from conveying grace, it is a supplication *for* grace. "*Satisfaction*" is the *end* and *purport* of the sacrament : alms, fasting, and other "satisfactions", are visible, it is true ; they are visible works of piety done after the sacrament is conferred, and therefore not of the matter of it. The schoolmen, who first exalted penance to its sacramental dignity, were much perplexed to discover a visible sign for it ; which they, at length, found out in the laying on of hands in absolution. The Council of Trent, however, rejected this, by making absolution the *form*. So here is a sacrament without a visible

sign. This therefore must be a sacrament *Romani generis*, not of the institution of Christ.

PHILODOX.

Wherefore then does scripture enjoin the practice of it? Did not St. John pre-announce the gospel, "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?" And our Lord repeated it, "Do penance, and believe the gospel."

ORTHODOX.

That it is an *ordinance* of Christ proves not that it is a *sacrament* of Christ. But few perversions of scripture are more gross than that which renders the word *μετάνοια*, (simply signifying an inward change of mind, such as took place in the hearts of Jews and Gentiles when they received the truth; and such as takes place in sinners, when "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God",) by a term so opposite as *penance*, which conveys the notion of outward visible satisfaction. What meaning is conveyed by "Do penance, and believe the gospel"; i.e. shew your faith first, and believe afterwards:—or, "Esau found no place for penance, though he sought it carefully with tears"? What he sought with tears was a

change in his father's mind to revoke the blessing given to Jacob.

PHILODOX.

By translating the Greek, "Do penance", they follow strictly the Latin Vulgate, "agite pœnitentiam"; sanctioned as authentic by the Council of Trent. However, in the passage respecting Esau, they render it, "he found no place for repentance", as your authorized version has it.

ORTHODOX.

And herein they shew the impropriety of their general rendering; for the original term is evidently used in the same sense in all the passages.—They have authorized the Vulgate, it is true; pronouncing an imperfect and often erroneous translation to be authentic, to the derogation of the inspired original.—Not that, by the awkward expression "agite pœnitentiam", does the Vulgate properly convey the Romish, "Do penance." "Agere pœnitentiam", says Lactantius, "is nothing else than to profess and affirm that they will sin no more."* The persons addressed by St. John and our Lord, were the unconverted Jews. How then could they enjoin them to do penance before bap-

* De Vero Cultu, l. 6. c. 13.

tism ; when, according to the Papal theology, penance before baptism can make no satisfaction ? Suppose an unbaptized heathen to follow this presumed instruction, the priest would be apt to tell him, that he misunderstood the direction given. By their own tenets, then, the rendering is proved unwarrantable. And although it may aid their religion, by pointing out their false version to those who venture not to connect two ideas when the Church forbids, yet is it a wresting of the word of God ; and leading the people from the inward change commanded, to an external meritorious satisfaction, alien to the whole tenor of the sacred volume.

PHILODOX.

Although as a sacrament it was not yet instituted, penance was commanded as a duty from the first. And as a sacrament, the full power was conferred upon his priests by the Lord after his resurrection.

ORTHODOX.

Although not a sacrament at first, yet if it was a duty, it would still be the same in other respects. And if penance cannot be performed without auricular confession, how could it be then enjoined ? Did St. John, think you, administer this confession to all who came to his baptism ? If he did, why then

do not they exact the same? If he did not, what honest purpose can such perverted construction promote?

PHILODOX.

If in the words, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted", &c. our Lord did not confer on the priesthood, a judicial power of enjoining penitential satisfactions, and all the other appendages of binding and loosing, the words seem to have no meaning.

ORTHODOX.

The words may confer a judicial power, and yet not institute a sacrament; of which, indeed, there is not a shadow of appearance.—They confer upon the ministry a power of absolution, of remitting and retaining sins. So saith the Church of Rome; and so saith the Church of England; but with this essential difference;—the former makes it a judicial, the latter a ministerial act; the one constitutes priests vicars of Christ, lords over the consciences of men, with eternal life or death suspended on their nod; the other, dispensers and ministers of Christ's word and sacraments; helpers of the people in the faith, not despots over the minds of their brethren. The one constitutes "presidents and judges" over God's heritage; the other, "elders and overseers" of the Church of Christ. The one confers

on man that incommunicable property of God, "I am He that blotteth out iniquity"; the other shrinks within that limit, "Who can forgive sins but God only?"

PHILODOX.

This is an argument of the unbelieving Jews, who thought that it was blasphemy for men to remit sins. Romanists say, that Protestants borrow the objection from the enemies of Christ.

ORTHODOX.

The objection of the Jews was not against a ministerial power of forgiving sins, for this their own priesthood possessed; but against an absolute judicial power, which the scriptures had confined to God alone. Whether they argued erroneously, let the Fathers decide. The above text is quoted by Irenæus, Tertullian, Hilary, Jerome, Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, Bede, &c. &c. insisting that the Jews argued rightly; that no one can judicially remit sins but God alone; and that therefore they ought to have acted upon their principles, and confessed the divinity of Jesus. "But", remarks the great Usher, "the world is come unto a good pass, when we must be accounted heretics now-a-days, and consorted with miscreant Jews, for holding the self-same thing that the Fathers of the ancient

Church delivered as a most certain truth, whensoever they had any occasion to treat of this part of the history of the gospel.* But to traduce and annul the foundations of the primitive faith, and expose it to the assaults of its bitterest foes, is a trifle with Rome, when balanced against the interests of her unhallowed dogmas.

Judicial absolution of sins; the constitution of a “tribunal”, before which all men are to be sisted, under peril of their soul’s salvation; to confess every secret of the heart, and to hang upon the breath of a guilty mortal, as the “president and judge” of his everlasting state; this we renounce and abhor, as that profane assumption of divine prerogative, that high point of arrogancy and proud usurpation, which as ill beseem the servants commissioned by the meek and lowly Jesus, as they too faithfully characterize the vicegerents of that “man of sin, who sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself to be God.”

PHILODOX.

What then is the privilege conferred of remitting and retaining sins? Is “priestly absolution” mere words without meaning?

* Ans. to Jesuit, p. 79.

ORTHODOX.

Such authority as the ministers and dispensers of God's word and sacraments, and overseers of the flock of Christ, may duly claim, is the inalienable right of the priesthood. *Public* absolution in the congregation is exercised by the Anglican Church; and in a form which clearly elucidates her views upon the point, viz. that God "hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." *Private* absolution to the sick she denies not, if the patient earnestly desires it; thereby retaining a source of comfort to a desponding penitent, but disowning the necessity of it to salvation. This absolution is, by the restriction, seldom used. And although the terms of it be indicative, yet is the form not judicial, but declaratory or deprecatory, which is evident from the prayer immediately following; where, having absolved the penitent, the priest supplicates as for one who still "desireth pardon and forgiveness"; and implores the Almighty "to consider his contrition, and accept his tears"; not to "impute unto him his former sins", &c. This Private absolution, therefore, is to be expounded by the Public one, in which it is affirmed, that God hath commissioned his ministers

to “declare and pronounce” to penitents, his absolution, &c.

PHILODOX.

If the prayer after the absolution, in your visitation of the sick, proves that it is not judicial, then the prayer after the Romish absolution may prove the same.

ORTHODOX.

Certainly not ; because both Churches have expounded their intention. The Anglican Church affirms, that her ministers have no other power than “to declare and pronounce” absolution to penitents. The Roman claims a judicial right to absolve, and forbids you to interpret her absolution by the prayers ; insisting that these “do not belong to the *form* of (that which gives force to) the sacrament of penance, neither are necessary to the administration of it, but are laudably added according to the custom of the Church” ; a custom commencing in ages which would have abhorred this pretended sacrament, and all its appendages.

Sins are described in scripture as debts to God. No one hath means to discharge the debt due to the Creator, save that Intercessor who paid an all-sufficient ransom by the inestimable price of his own blood. He hath mercifully commissioned a certain order of men, not to interfere as umpires, to appor-

tion the recompense to be paid by man to God, themselves being his debtors also ; but to announce divine forgiveness to the penitent, and rigid justice to the impenitent.

PHILODOX.

But a mere declaratory power seems ill-expressed by terms so peremptory as, “ Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” The Church of England, therefore, appears to act with impropriety in using these words in her ordination service. Your Dissenters also agree with the Romanists in this objection.

ORTHODOX.

That such is the strict meaning of the commission of our Lord, is not more evident from the case itself than from the analogous diction of scripture, in which this indicative language is repeatedly used, when a bare ministerial commission is conferred. When Elijah was commanded to anoint Elisha to be his successor, the language is, “ Him that escapeth the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.” But the commission given to Elisha was not a literal military commission, like that to Jehu and Hazael, but a grant of the prophetic office of Elijah. He was to declare to those who survived the destroying

sword of these two potentates, that they should also perish, if they repented not. The consecration of Isaiah to the same ministry is thus expressed ; “ Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes”, &c. Isaiah did not execute this office by actually fattening the heart, making heavy the ears, and shutting the eyes of the people ; but by indicating their obstinate blindness to the ways of God, and his vengeance upon them for the rejection of the truth. The commission to Jeremiah is the most lofty in the sacred volume, and has been applied literally, and not inexpressively, by many of the popes, to their usurpation over the bodies and souls of men : “ Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down ; to build and to plant.” But did this afflicted prophet do any more than “ by the words in his mouth”, declare and announce the ruin of the Jewish and heathen states ?—There is a sentence of Hosea, which connects the letter of such language with the spirit ; “ I have hewed them by the prophets ; I have slain them by the words of my mouth.” The ministers of God morally hew and slay the wicked by that “ sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

I know not that the objection of our Dissenters to this use of the terms in the Anglican ordination is deserving of much notice, as we are not discussing their opinions. But if it should seem otherwise to you, let me send you to the exposition of their best commentator, the pious and discreet Matthew Henry, who, whilst he very properly applies the commission of remitting and retaining sins primarily to the apostles, yet candidly allows, that therein an authority of the same kind is bestowed universally upon the sacred office; and that the passage must be understood as “a general charter to the Church and her ministers”; which fully vindicates our application of it.

PHILODOX.

But taking the commission to be declaratory of God's mercy and justice, how do you suppose the words “remitting and retaining sins” to be explained?

ORTHODOX.

By analogy of scripture language, and by that authority which the first ministers of the Gospel exercised;—I. Sins are remitted and retained by preaching the terms of salvation and perdition, as kingdoms were destroyed and planted by the prophet proclaiming the conditions on which their existence or ruin depended. II. The lawful pastors

of the Church do bind or loose the flock of Christ, by public declaration of general absolution to the penitent, and of unrepealed condemnation to the hardened sinner : by private deprecation of the wrath of God ; for the prayers of the “ elders of the Church”, saith St. James, “ shall save the sick, and if he have any sins, they shall be forgiven him” : by administration of the sacraments and means of grace ; of “ baptism for the remission of sins”, and of the Eucharist, the seal of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, for the redemption of the world : by preaching the word of salvation, “ declaring that eternal life which was manifest” in the incarnate Son of God ; for “ as the wicked”, saith Solomon, “ is *holden* with the cords of his sins, and dieth without instruction”, so by the “ instruction of life” are the bands of transgression *loosed*. Therefore St. Paul chiefly places the “ ministry of reconciliation” in this ; that those who are called thereto as ambassadors of Christ, do “ beseech men to be reconciled unto God”. Other means there are ; but these may suffice to shew the scriptural explication of “ binding and loosing”. The apostles received this ministry with especial powers and privileges annexed, which it would be profane for their successors to claim. But the commission itself is general in kind, and changeth not its object. Every

minister of Christ, who, by preaching according to the instructions which the inspired oracles bequeathed; by using such prayer as Christ enjoined; by administration of those sacraments which he hath instituted; and by other means of grace and discipline conformable to his will;—every minister, I say, who thus “converts a sinner from the error of his ways”, doth as truly remit and retain sins as St. Peter or St. Paul himself. With privileges immeasurably inferior, and with pretensions in no respect to be compared, for the exercise,—the commission as directly belongs to every successor of the apostles in his ordinary office, as to them; equally proceeds from the same divine Head, and participates in the same infallible promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

PHILODOX.

You confine your remarks to loosing or remitting sins.

ORTHODOX.

Binding and retaining is therein included. The terms are correlative. He who thus looses may thus bind. Sin is a chain by which we all are “tied and bound”. The sole medium of release is through the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, and in the way

He hath constituted. Whoever embraces the means, is loosed ; whoever rejects them, remains bound.

PHILODOX.

But how does this explain St. Paul's conduct to the incestuous Corinthian, whom he says " he delivered to Satan ", and afterwards released ?

ORTHODOX.

I have said, the apostles had extraordinary powers to which no minister can now pretend. Language is appropriate in their lips, which would be unseemly in the mouth of spiritual rulers at present. Possessed of the gift of " discerning spirits ", they were preserved from error in their decisions. Yet, in the case of that Corinthian, St. Paul did no more than every governor of the Church may do. He excommunicated a person guilty of incest ; and afterwards, upon his sincere repentance, relaxed the censure. The Church which hath not the power of expelling such criminals as this, hath no power at all. Those censures which she hath authority to inflict, she hath authority to relax ; and such relaxation was the sole indulgence known to the primitive Christians : a power like this the Church of England assumes. But not as the claims

and exercise of Rome, so are hers. The arms of a pure Church are not carnal, but spiritual; the true weapons of the Prince of Peace, and of that "royal law of liberty", which produceth willing captives by voluntary bonds; "bringing every *thought* in subjection to the obedience of Christ."

PHILODOX.

Power is surely impotent, without means to enforce it.

ORTHODOX.

Spiritual and moral means there are; coercive power and corporal restraint belong not to the Church of Christ. These are the instruments of earthly potentates, disowned by Him, whose "kingdom is not of this world."

PHILODOX.

Where then is your due authority?

ORTHODOX.

In our office and ever-blessed Master. His stewards we are; not the "judges and presidents" over the eternal state of our brethren. We claim that just authority and respect due to those who bear the commission of the Lord of all.

PHILODOX.

We have digressed from our proper inquiry. Let us then return to the examination of the sacrament before us. To discharge that absolution which the Roman Church claims, Auricular Confession is insisted upon as necessary. In fact, this is commanded by St. James, "Confess your sins one to another."

ORTHODOX.

Does St. James mean, "Confess your sins privately to the priest; unfold every secret of your heart to him, on peril of eternal salvation"? Strange! that he should have expressed himself in so mysterious a way.

The advantage and duty of *public* confession of sins is not in discussion, neither of *private* confession to a minister, under peculiar circumstances; which the Anglican Church recommends. But it is the Roman mode of controversy to assemble together a string of passages, proving what no one disputes, with intent to throw dust into people's eyes, and blind them to the real question. Thus, in the case before us; public confession of sins is commanded by scripture; particular confession to the priest is recommended by all, as serviceable in certain cases. Therefore, infers Rome, it is certain,

by divine command, that auricular confession is part of a sacrament, and that every person is bound to stand before the tribunal of the priest, and, upon peril of his soul, to discover every secret of his heart, and every part and portion of his conduct ; to answer every question which may be proposed, good or bad, profligate or prudent ; to place his or her life, character, virtue, modesty, peace of mind, at the mercy of a man, who may be living in mortal sin : —nor must he shrink herefrom, for upon the decision of this “ president and judge”, his eternal state depends. Where is there a shadow of authority for this vile thing ; this

——“ Monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen?”

PHILODOX.

You refer especially to the *abuses* of confession. But you know councils and popes have passed severe censures upon a priest who betrays his trust herein.

ORTHODOX.

True ; and these reiterated sentences evince how scandalous the abuses have been. But what reparation can be given to the injured person ? What restoration to a mind in whom the seeds of impurity have thus been implanted ? By this precept, every

house and family, husband and wife, parent and child, every human tie and feeling, are subjected to the mercy of the priest. A door is opened on all sides to temptation and wickedness. The consequences, in a political point of view, are notorious ; nor are those of a domestic kind left to conjecture. Writers of all parties have raised the voice against it. So notorious have been its demoralizing effects, that, unwilling as popes and councils are to disclose the infamy of their ministers, they have been compelled to it ; decrees and bulls have from time to time been passed against these infamous results. " At this time ", says Erasmus, " we see that there are very many who gratify their curiosity by this kind of confessions ; others, who under this cloak commit shameless acts not to be named ; the conduct of some is polluted as by a contagion, especially from the narration of divers kinds of lusts, to be ignorant of which is a great part of innocence ; others again, by this instrument, fortify their tyranny over the people, whose fathers they ought to be ; and to many, confession is nothing else than a net for gain, with which every part of Christianity is infected. " *

PHILODOX.

But priests cannot safely absolve without a know-

* Ad Leum. 216.

ledge of the sinner's real state, which can only be acquired by particular confession.

ORTHODOX.

That such confession is not necessary to absolution, we prove by their own practice. Baptism, they say, absolves from all sins, without confession. Nay, in confession, the priest absolves from all sins which the penitent may have forgotten. "Cannot a creditor", demands Erasmus, "forgive a debt, unless the debtor enumerates the several items of the sum indebted?" A forward hypocrite may detail with particularity his offences; and a sincere, but modest penitent may rest in generalities.

PHILODOX.

But it is often necessary, where a man has injured his neighbour, to enjoin restitution upon him, which otherwise he might neglect.

ORTHODOX.

The Anglican Church commands her ministers to enforce this duty; that, if any have wronged other, they "make amends to the uttermost of their power"; for this is one of the greatest, although, I blush to say it, one of the most neglected of Christian duties, even among some who profess to

be guided by the principles of the Gospel: although if a man be sincere in his penitence, this will be one of his first and clearest obligations; and it is of vital importance, that he be warned, that his repentance is false or vain, if it be not evinced by such proof. In doubtful cases of conscience, the layman certainly will do well to resort to his spiritual guide; and most persons who have a sense of religion have, I presume, a confidential minister to whom they can open their mind. But all this is far different from what Rome enforces. This answers not her aim.

PHILODOX.

They assert, that auricular confession never could have “ been introduced, had it not been received from the beginning, as a divine ordinance for the remission of sin. It has been practised from the earliest ages of Christianity.”

ORTHODOX.

So says the late “ Declaration of the Catholic Bishops”; and they moreover affirm, that “ the sacrament of penance is an institution of Christ, no less than the sacrament of baptism. The belief of both rests on the same foundation.” Viewing this “ Declaration ” as the solemn statement of men of cha-

racter and rectitude, I cannot but consider that they never would have ventured upon such an assertion as the above, had not reverence for truth been previously absorbed in the paramount interests of a Church, whose existence is incompatible therewith; and had they not been likewise satisfied of the credulity of an age, alike eminent for diffused learning, and for slight acquaintance with theological record. The sacrament of baptism hath a command as clear as words can convey: for sacramental confession, there is not a sentence of holy writ, nor a single orthodox evidence during a thousand years*.

The history of auricular confession is briefly this. In the rigid discipline of the primitive Church, *public* offenders were reformed by public penance, of which, confession in the face of the congregation was so indispensable a part, that they were not

* The publication of Mr. Townsend's "Review", since these pages were written, has induced the erasure of some additional remarks on the above Declaration. This gentleman, whether occupied in the elucidation and arrangement of holy writ, or in its collateral object, the exposure of Romish error and misrepresentation, displays, in his several writings, the features of one who has not less the general interests of the Universal Church at heart, than, which is, perhaps, even more rare, a true Protestant feeling, with a fearless and undaunted candour in avowing it.

readmitted to holy ordinances without it. Others who had *secretly* offended, and were therefore conscious of moral unfitness for the Lord's table, not uncommonly disclosed their offences to their minister; a sense of piety overcoming shame; well knowing also that this voluntary proof of contrition would procure them more favour, than the discovery of their sin would create disgrace. Every case thus disclosed to the priest, was by him referred to the people; public confession then followed, and due prayer was made for the penitent. The earliest mention of such private confession as this, is, as far as I know, to be found in Origen, who commends it, but accompanies his commendation with a cautionary advice; that the penitent should be careful to choose for his confessor a pious and discreet person. In that strict age of discipline, then, this confession was voluntary, not universally practised, and never enjoined. It arose from a pious fear of receiving the sacraments, before the offender was pronounced worthy by the minister of God; and so far is the principle from being censured, that our Church recommends it. This secret confession, you perceive, was public also; inasmuch as it was published to the congregation, and satisfaction made to the Church by the customary penance.

When, however, that charity, which in the first Christians had absorbed every narrow feeling, began to cool; when heresies, and schisms, and worldly-mindedness spread their baneful influence over the vineyard of God, this public confession, which had been a powerful restraint on vice, became a handle for malice to misconstrue and scandalize. Therefore, the Greek Church first, and the Latin afterwards, laid it aside, commanding both confession and penance to be private. Nor do we blame them for this arrangement. The face of Christianity had sadly degenerated from its pristine beauty. The love which had knit Christians together was relaxed; and each was too ready to carp at the exposure of the faults of others.—But the immediate occasion of the change among the Greeks appears to have originated with the austere Novatians, whose overweening purity was disgusted by the re-admission to communion of those who after baptism had fallen into mortal sin. They rent the Church with invectives against the penitential discipline, exclaiming, that “to shew favour to sinners, was teaching the innocent to sin.” The Greek Church, therefore, took away the public confession, but retained the private; not, however, leaving it to the discretion of any or every priest, but appointing a penitentiary or confessor in each church.

This continued for some time, until, one of those scandalous circumstances, which appear to be inherent in the system, occurring at Constantinople, the Patriarch, Nectarius, abolished the necessity of *private* confession, as that of public had been extinguished before, and left it entirely to the conscience of individuals. The change was sanctioned by the prelates, and confirmed by his successor, St. Chrysostom. This was the estimate of confession in the Greek Church. *Public* she took away by appointing confessors, and *Private* by annulling them; "leaving every man to settle his own conscience for the holy mysteries", as Socrates remarks; who lived at the time, but disapproved of the proceeding.

PHILODOX.

But the Greek Church did not abolish penance altogether.

ORTHODOX.

That orderly and public discipline which every Church enjoins against notorious offenders, she still retained. But clear is it that the Greeks knew nothing of confession as sacramental, nor even as necessary by divine law; otherwise Nectarius would not have annihilated it, nor the prelates sanctioned, nor St. Chrysostom perpetuated, the annihilation. They accounted confession to be a point of disci-

pline, not of the *matter* of a sacrament; they therefore altered and abolished it at pleasure: nor do we hear of any who enforced it, except the Arian and other heretics.

A similar substitution of private for public confession took place, though at a later period, in the Latin Church; and Pope Leo the Great assigns a similar reason for the change. He commends "that fear of God which fears not human shame"; yet abrogates a general practice which caused scandal, and exposed a man to the malice of his foes; directing the penitent to confess in private to God and to the priest. Thus, then, it appears, that by the early Christians *public* confession was enjoined. When the world and the Church began to be confounded together, the rules of primitive piety became a stumbling-block of offence. *Private* confession, of later and voluntary origin, and abolished in the East, as compulsory, from experience of its evil, became general through the Western Church; and, as her corruptions and ambition attained their summit, was made, at length, a point of necessity. The peremptory obligation of it was first decreed by the fourth Lateran Council, so late as the year 1215, which required the faithful of both sexes to confess all their sins at least once a year to their curate. But that it was part of a sacrament, no

Council defined before that of Trent. Here then be it repeated, that for a thousand years it was never taught, that auricular confession is either sacramental, or of necessity to salvation.

Since, however, our Roman bishops have cast down the gauntlet, and fearlessly maintained that this auricular confession, "hath been practised from the earliest ages of Christianity", we will not summon a host of Fathers, who, indeed, pour in upon us; but we will call witnesses yet more irrefragable, even their own most eminent and devoted writers, to accept the challenge.

Theodore, the celebrated Archbishop of Canterbury, himself a Greek, born at Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul, will be sufficient testimony for his native Church and his own opinion. He saith, "The Greeks and the East confess to God alone: and it is lawful to confess to God alone." Peter Lombard, the oracle of the Roman Church for ages, tells us, "The learned held different sentiments about it [confession], for the doctors have delivered different, nay, almost contradictory opinions upon the subject." Gratian, the authorized expounder of their canon law, says of confession, "I leave to the reader's judgment to adhere to which side he pleases, for wise and learned men have favoured both." "That without confession" remarks Se-

meca, "there is no forgiveness to adults, is false. It was ordained by tradition, rather than authority of scripture; therefore, it is not binding on the Greeks, who have no such tradition." "There is no clear authority", adds Panormitan, "that God or Christ ordained confession to a priest." "All the canonists say", acknowledges Maldonat, "that confession was brought in only by the law of the Church." Finally, says Erasmus, "We do not read anywhere that private confession was anciently commanded. . . It is apparent, that in Jerome's time, secret confession was not yet instituted."* So much for the veracious "Declaration" of our "Catholic bishops."

PHILODOX.

The other part of the matter of this sacrament is *Satisfaction*. Now the Roman doctrine of merit, upon which the competency of man to render satisfaction for sin depends, is too often misunderstood. The schoolmen distinguished works into those that have merit *de congruo*, of congruity, which are such as are done before baptism, and have an inherent fitness to be rewarded by the free grace of God; and those that have merit *de condigno*, of condignity, such good works as being

* Usher.

done after grace received, have in them merit to make satisfaction for sin, through the efficacy of the death of Christ. Now of works of congruity, the Church knows nothing, because they proceed not from a holy principle ; but of the latter kind, of works proceeding from divine grace, she maintains an inherent worth and merit to satisfy the wrath of God.

ORTHODOX.

Doubtless she does : the denial of it would justify the Reformation, and uproot her system. For simple as this doctrine may appear, the operative divinity of Rome is built upon it. Masses, absolutions, indulgences, penances, mortifications, fastings, pilgrimages, in short, almost all their practices hang thereon. Take this pillar away, and the fabric falls. Hence with what overwhelming force does the great primitive and Protestant doctrine of justification by faith influence the whole controversy between the Churches.

Could we suppose a possibility of any works possessing merit, it would be of such as arise from the voluntary motion of the doer. But the Council of Florence declares that works to be satisfactory must be such as the priest chooses to order the penitent to perform. These are accounted not only necessary to salvation, but a satisfaction for sin, made

unto God. True it is, the Church enjoins that these works be chiefly prayer, fasting, alms, &c.; nevertheless, all is left to the will of the priest. Hence those endless works, observances of superstition, which form so great a portion of their satisfactions: which, so far from being the good works that are acceptable unto God, by faith, are rather offensive in His sight: and which evidently shew, that satisfaction to the priest and the Church supersedes satisfaction to God.

Certainly he libels the Church of Rome, who affirms that she allows merit to any works but those that are done by a justified person; but she anathematizes all who say that the "good works of a justified man are so the gifts of God, as not to be also the good merits of the justified person himself; or that a justified man himself does not truly merit by his good works increase of grace, eternal life", &c., the inconsistency of which tenet is lost in its arrogance and pride; it is most offensive and shocking to every humble mind.

There is no dispute with them of the necessity of good works, rightly so called, viz. of that entire obedience which the law of God enjoins. Necessary they are:—I. Because it is commanded, that "they who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works", and this precept is enough

for every faithful Christian. II. Because they are the path to heaven, God having “before ordained that we should walk in them.” III. Because they are the sole evidence of a lively faith, which “without works is dead.” IV. Because the practice of them increases the innate principle of grace; as putting out talents to usury enhances the stock. V. Because habits of holiness render those who shall be saved “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” VI. Because God is glorified when his people “bear much fruit.” VII. Because good actions are the necessary result of good principles; and assimilate us to the image of Him “who went about doing good, leaving us an example to follow his steps.”—Divers other obligations are there for the cultivation of practical religion; but these may suffice as well to enforce its necessity, as to display how wide is the distance between the duty and the merit of holiness. And never has the Protestant doctrine been more forcibly and candidly expressed than in the well known words of our own Hooker: “We acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing well; but the meritorious dignity of doing well we utterly renounce.”

PHILODOX.

But both scripture and the Fathers speak often

of the worth or merit of the righteous ; as our Lord says of the saints at Sardis ; “ they shall walk with me in white ; for they are *worthy*.” We read also of fruits “ *worthy* of repentance.” What is *worth* but *merit* ?

ORTHODOX.

The “ worth ” imputed to the saints is a moral suitableness for heaven, wrought in the heart by the Divine Spirit ; not a meritorious desert :—and “ fruits worthy of repentance”, are works worthy of those who have entered upon a new life, and received a holy principle ; as to “ walk *worthy* of the vocation wherewith we are called”, is to walk suitably to the intent of the gospel. And our “ chief worthiness”, to use the words of Bishop Bull, “ is a deep sense of our own unworthiness.” All scripture proceeds upon the great truth, that “ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of His mercy He saved us.”

PHILODOX.

But the merit ascribed by the Church of Rome to works proceeds entirely from the grace of God.

ORTHODOX.

This removes not the objection. Eternal life is always spoken of as an inheritance purchased by the

merit of Christ alone : and if Christians owe all to God, they can merit nothing of Him. They cannot satisfy by merely giving back that which is His own. All are his servants ; bound to obey his will, to the utmost, with all the faculties of soul and body : their whole time and labour are talents of his right. And, after the utmost application of mind and strength to obedience, they are still “ unprofitable servants ; they have done no more than is their duty to do.” “ What hast thou that thou didst not receive ?” And what merit is there in paying to God that which is his own ? The best work even of the best of mortals is imperfect in itself, and counterbalanced by other grievous sins : “ even the just man falleth seven times a day”, as Dr. Milner quotes on another occasion. The prayer of the purest soul to its last gasp must be, “ Forgive us our debts.” Nay, if good works were perfect, they are inadequate to deserve even the least of God’s providential mercies ; much less to merit a part of eternal glory. There is not the slightest proportion between the feebleness of the desert, and the exceeding greatness of the reward.

PHILODOX.

But the merit of works is considered by them rather in the light of an adequacy to satisfy the

wrath of God, than strictly to merit heaven ; which will be better understood by a distinct statement of their doctrine. Both sides allow that, morally speaking, remission of sins is unattainable except by just and strict satisfaction. And both agree, that Christ, by his obedience to the death on the cross, so fully satisfied the Divine justice, that all penitents obtain in justification a remission of the guilt of sin. So far the two Churches accord ; but here they separate. Rome insists, that although, by this remission, the eternal punishment is removed to those who die in a state of grace, yet a temporary punishment remains for the sins by them committed after baptism. And this punishment must either be satisfied for in this world, or endured in purgatory. Satisfaction may be made in the present life by such works of penance as the priest enjoins, &c. ; and if this be not entirely discharged, it must be made up in purgatory, whence the sinner shall not be released till he has paid the very last mite. satisfactions are to be made for him, too, not only by his own deeds and sufferings, but by masses, and by applying to him the meritorious works of others, and so on.

ORTHODOX.

On this point, the differences between the

Churches are altogether irreconcilable. We maintain, that Christ offered that all-sufficient sacrifice, by which both the guilt and entire punishment of all sins are done away to the truly penitent ; and that there is no penalty of vindictive justice to be satisfied for by them. We argue this, not more from the positive declarations of scripture, than from the equity of the case ; from the perfection of the Redeemer's ransom ; and from the nature of the Divine justice. Remission of sins is, in every respect, a gratuitous boon of Divine mercy, as must be allowed by all who do not wilfully close their eyes to the word of God ; but THAT sin is not gratuitously remitted, for which the sinner must make entire satisfaction ; THAT debtor is not freely discharged, who is kept in prison till he has paid the last mite. Forgiveness of sins is plenary, not partial. Purgatory penalties are asserted to be equal to those of hell in suffering, and to differ from them in duration alone. If this be so, the gracious message of the gospel is a delusion. So far from being a remission of sins to the penitent, it is only a modified punishment ; which contradicts the word and tenor of the Christian dispensation. Nor can the repentant sinner lay to his mind that peace with a reconciled God which St. Paul declares to be the immediate result of justification, if there still hangs

over him a heavy portion of Divine vengeance, unrepealed; and for which he must make strict satisfaction before he can enter "into the joy of his Lord."

Again, everywhere is the satisfaction of Christ declared to be complete, and the price paid by him abundantly sufficient to satisfy for both the guilt and penalty of sin; and to be as fully applied for the benefit of the penitent, by faith, as though himself had paid it. But to say that Christ made entire satisfaction for all who faithfully receive him, and yet that they are to pay a portion for themselves, is derogatory to the covenant of the Redeemer, and dishonourable to the equity and goodness of God; because it supposes him to demand a second satisfaction from those for whom plenary satisfaction had already been made. Justice can never exact penalty but with the contemplation of guilt in the culprit. If Christ took away the guilt, he took away that which alone could be the object of punishment, and removed of course the necessity of satisfaction by the person forgiven.

In fact, to make meritorious satisfaction a part of the sacrament of penance, is apparently inconsistent. What is this penance, in every branch of it, but a humble acknowledgment of sin? The *matter* is "contrition, confession, and satisfaction." Now,

that in the same sacrament man should feel contrite under a load of guilt, confess himself obnoxious to eternal justice, and, in so doing, make satisfaction thereto, is surely a contradiction in terms.

PHILODOX.

But although we cannot fully satisfy the divine justice of God, are we to make no attempts to appease His wrath ?

ORTHODOX.

Strictly speaking, those terms should not be founded. Although we are unable to form an adequate conception of satisfaction to the divine justice, yet moral intuition seems to convey to us the notion that it is a *real* satisfaction done to the violated attribute of the eternal Legislator. But when Scripture holds forth God as angry with his disobedient people, the language is evidently *figurative* ; and by a similar figure, repentance and obedience may be said to appease his wrath. But satisfaction Christ alone did or could make. Through his mediation the penitent may be said to appease his offended Parent ; but to merit or satisfy, Christ hath neither companion nor attendant : “ of the people there is none with him.” An undutiful child may appease an injured father by falling down before him ; but, by that act of prostration, he can, in

no wise, be said either to satisfy his justice, or merit his love.—Here, however, the parallel, though obvious, must remain very incomplete.

That we are to do all in our power to please God, would be to repeat what I have said before.

PHILODOX.

But is not this doctrine of satisfaction by the merit of works constant in the writings of the Fathers ?

ORTHODOX.

If it were really so, much as we may venerate their piety and labours, we could not hear them contradicting the infallible word of God. Of the primitive Fathers, no attempt is made to prove that they held any thing of the kind ; but their writings contain evidence to the contrary. In the works of the later Fathers, we certainly meet with terms which imply the power of man to merit with, and to satisfy, God ; but, taken in the strict literal sense, they are often as inconsistent with the Romish doctrine as with ours. We are not, however, hastily to condemn these venerable men, from what may be a misapprehension of their language. There is a meaning in which to “make satisfaction” is true, even in a theological sense. When we use the expression to signify nothing more than a temporal punishment

which sometimes follows sin as naturally as effect follows cause ; or in the sense of special retribution, sent by God upon certain notorious offenders, &c. in such cases the epithet is altogether unobjectionable. The phrases, to *merit*, to *deserve*, oftentimes signify in the Fathers neither more nor less than to acquire, obtain, or follow. Take a few examples from St. Augustin : “ Worshippers of demons *merit* certain temporal comforts.” Now he surely means not to say, that demon-worship morally deserves temporal comfort. Again : “ Paul, by his many persecutions and blasphemies, *deserved* to be called a vessel of election” ; and “ the stiff-necked Israelites *deserved* to be delivered by many miracles.” The term here signifies, to *obtain* ; else never did fanatic argue more madly than this holy Father. The strict word, *Satisfaction*, requires the less explanation, because it equally imports, to make compensation or to suffer punishment.

“ It is an easy thing”, says a great divine, “ for a wrangling sophist to dispute of merits in the schools, or for a vain orator to declaim of merits out of the pulpit ; but when we come to lie upon our death-beds, and present ourselves at the last hour before the tribunal of Christ, it is high time both for you and us to renounce our own merits, and to cast ourselves naked into the arms of our Saviour.

That any works of ours, who are, the best of us, unprofitable servants, (which properly are not ours, but God's own gifts; and if they were ours, are a just debt due unto Him, setting aside God's free promise and gracious acceptation,) should condignly, by their own intrinsical value, deserve the joys of heaven, to which they have no more proportion than they have to satisfy for the eternal torments of hell; this is that which we have renounced, and which we ought never to admit.* And many Roman divines, when withdrawn from the din of controversy to the tranquillity of private meditation, find their consolations in the doctrine thus beautifully impressed by this profound prelate. Nay, Bellarmin, even with the pen of disputation in his hand, after labouring to defend the doctrine of his Church (which, if defensible, he, least of all men, had failed), sits down, at last, in the Protestant conclusion: "Because of the uncertainty of our own righteousness, and the danger of vain-glory, it is the safest way to place our entire trust in the alone mercy and benignity of God alone."† And may that mercy preserve all who regard their salvation, from forsaking this "safest way", to turn aside into the devious and dreary paths of human confidence.

* Archbishop Bramhall's Ans. to Militiere.

† De Just. l. v. c. 7. prop. 3.

But we must not forget, that the “worst remains behind.” It is not so much that the believer hath worth through Christ to merit for his own salvation, but that he hath an overflow of obedience, a superfluity of righteous deeds, to atone for others as well as for himself. This is that presumption, that detraction from the Saviour’s office, that fountain of iniquity wherewith their Church is deluged.

PHILODOX.

That topic will more properly come before us in considering the question of indulgences.

ORTHODOX.

True: but we must briefly touch upon one practical part of this tenet; I mean, the use made in absolution of these satisfactions. So really deserving and satisfactory are the works which a man can do for himself, and others do for him, that they are positively conjoined with the Saviour’s merits, in absolving; one form of which runs thus: “The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the blessed Virgin and all the saints, and whatever good thou hast done, and whatever ill thou hast suffered; be unto thee for remission of sins, &c.”* What can be more unchristian than this

* Ritual, p. 90.

shameless formula? Here is a compound of the passion of the Redeemer, the merits of the saints, and the penances of the sinner, all jumbled together, to make up a full remission of sins; provided, at last, the absolver be in the humour to apply them. For, to consider the whole, see what a confusion of false doctrine and absurdity is presented. The sacrifice of the incarnate Son of God is not sufficient, in Roman theology, to discharge the penitent, without the supernumerary merits of the saints; and these again are inadequate to supply the defect, without the adjunct of the good works and sufferings of the patient. But surely, when all these are compressed together, the absolution is complete, and the repentant sinner safe. No! here steps in the Council of Trent, with a caveat to suspend the whole. "Let him not so flatter himself"; for without the intention of the priest all is void. Neither the Saviour's passion, nor the saints' merits, nor the penitent's works, nor the Church's penance, avail one jot, if it be the design of the "president and judge", that it shall not avail. I verily believe that the annals of divinity scarcely contain such a bewildering labyrinth of nonsense and impiety:—"a mighty maze, but *not without a plan.*"

Here is a sacrament, necessary, by divine command, to the salvation of all; the penitent faith-

fully discharges every part of his duty. He receives solemn absolution; the merits of his Saviour, of the saints, of his own good works and sufferings, are all applied to him. He rests in plenary remission, and in a conscience at peace with God; when suddenly Rome rings a knell in his ears, with this appalling theme: "Flatter not thyself in the sincerity of thy faith, and the fulness of thine obedience; in the merits of thy Saviour and of the saints: for all are vain, if the priest, whose heart thou canst not know, did not seriously and intentionally absolve thee." Never, then, is he to feel assured that the weight of punishment is taken from his shoulders. For though the priest used the words of absolution, yet, if he intended not to do what the Church intends to be done, all is null and void; the penitent is as truly bound by his sins as though he had neither fulfilled the condition nor received the sacrament. Let him not daringly suppose that, having obeyed the divine and human law, his soul is in a safe state; for if he doth, Infallibility chains him down with a curse for his presumption. "Anathema" to any one who holds that "sins are remitted to him who confesses, if the priest has absolved, not seriously, but feignedly." Now, if we had not the decrees of Florence and Trent among us, never would it be imagined, that any assembly

of men, calling themselves Christians, the representatives of the Church, could have promulged a dogma thus senseless and detestable, teeming with impiety to God and wretchedness to his people; thus alien to the whole tenor of the sacred word and of Catholic tradition; rendering the sacraments and means of grace vague and uncertain things, not dependent on the goodness of the Institutor, the grace of the accompanying Spirit, and the fitness of the recipients, but upon a human being, be he ever so vicious and polluted, living, as they express it, "in mortal sin". Here is the mercy of him "who will have all men to be saved", checked by the corrupt humour of a sinful creature; here are the gifts and graces of the Redeemer linked to the chair of a man, who may be poisoned by prejudice, besotted by bigotry, deceived by misapprehension, bewildered by ignorance, influenced by malignity or sensuality; who may be a profligate, restraining absolution to the temptations of pollution, as hath often been the case; who may be an infidel, Jew, or Pagan, despising both the institutes of Christ and the intention of the Church; of which thousands have filled the confessorial tribunal. Yet, accursed be he who thinks that the efficacy of the sacraments of God and of remission of sins, is not dependent upon the will and disposi-

tion of this man. Anathema to him who saith, that if this hypocrite, profligate, or infidel, pronounce absolution not seriously, the repentant sinner is nevertheless acquitted before his Maker. After this, need we be amazed at any thing that Rome hath said or done? Are we yet to wonder that, where her sceptre sways, God is practically deposed from the heart, and those whom his supposed decree hath constituted "presidents and judges" of salvation, should be there enthroned? Need we be surprised at the direful effects which her priesthood hath produced in every age, by this tyranny, exercised over the consciences of the pious, the superstitious, the fearful, and the ignorant; over trembling culprits looking up to men on whose inward disposition happiness or torment is suspended? Contemplate, for the instant, such a dogma as this, wielded by a designing hand over the female mind; a mind susceptible to every tender impulse, and peculiarly sensitive to religious impressions? Do we want records to detail the advantages thus afforded and obtained over, I will not say, their weakness, but those very virtues which constitute the beauty and excellency of the sex, their best, their purest, and their holiest feelings? It is no longer unintelligible, to see a Catherine de Medicis planning and directing the slaughter of St. Bartholomew;

or our own unhappy Mary, of whom history portrays so many noble features, kindling the flames of Smithfield for her martyrs, and wasting, in agonizing fires, the blood of the best of her people.

PHILODOX.

Dr. Milner says, of this doctrine of intention, "there is no sensible person who does not see the essential difference between an action that is seriously performed, and the mimicking or mockery of it by a comedian or buffoon."

ORTHODOX.

This is saying nothing, or worse than nothing. I should suppose, if the confessor anticked in his chair, like a comedian or buffoon, it would be almost too much for Roman faith to endure. We are supposing the sacrament "seriously performed"; that it is "a serious performance", and nothing better; done with that solemnity which hypocrites may deem it necessary to assume. The question is not, whether the outward act be serious, but whether the performer has a mind to do what the Church intends. If he has not this mind, of which no mortal can be certain but himself; (for "who knoweth the mind of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in

him ?") let " not the penitent flatter himself that he is absolved in the sight of God."

Passing by, but never forgetting, the deadly operations of this and such like tenets in public life, what must be its effect on a mind disturbed by that appalling caution of holy writ, " the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ; who can know it ?" and taught, on authority he has never presumed to question, that the security of his soul rests on the sincerity of that dark sepulchre, whose corrupt foldings human eye cannot unravel. His safety is in that which passes mortal ken, the bosom of his confessor. God " alone knoweth the hearts of the children of men ". It is one of the few prerogatives which Rome hath left to the Almighty, unparticipated in by her priesthood.—So far from expecting safety in this Church alone, it is wonderful that any one who seriously thinks at all of his eternal interest, should remain within the pale of a religion which commands him to place no dependence upon inward faith or outward duty ; upon repentance of mind, or application of the means of grace ; which denounces anathema against the deniers of a doctrine, leading to the inevitable conclusion, that it is impossible for any man to be assured, that there is ever a valid sacrament, or true ordi-

nance administered ; or that there is any such character as bishop, priest, or minister, in the universe.

It might be imagined that Rome's conventicles had caballed together to make experiment how far human credulity would extend in the reception of prodigies. By transubstantiation, she denies to her votaries the use of their sensitive faculties ; by the doctrine of ministerial intention, she well nigh bereaves them of the benefit of their intellectual powers. For if it can be believed, that the sacraments and ordinances of God, remission of sins, and compensation to the divine justice, are limited by the fiat of a man living in mortal sin, it would be difficult to say what is the proposition, upon the credibility of which rational judgment may duly be employed.

The motive of those who confirmed this doctrine is not left to conjecture. It is stated with fearless candour. It is, that their priests may be constituted, "presidents and judges" of the spiritual state of men, in whose bonds the consciences of all may be indissolubly tied ; that every age, and sex, and station, may be sisted before a tribunal, commissioned to pass sentence of deliverance or condemnation ; and every mind and thought enslaved to the Church. "Wise in their generation are the children of this world" ; and few more wise than the forgers of these

unholy shackles. Still it may appear, that the vast aim of this worldly wisdom for once passed beyond the mark ; and, potent as might be the object, yet the dangerous results to their religion, from these and many such decrees, are so apparent, that their establishment can only be explained by resorting to that all-controlling Power, who, whilst in His inscrutable purposes, he allows this “deceivableness of iniquity” to overspread so vast a portion of his Church, yet never leaves the truth so completely veiled, as that inquiring men should find no light to dispel the obscurity. He hath forewarned us, that His mysterious wisdom would permit an anti-christian despotism to lord it for a while ; but He hath so portrayed the distinctive features of it, that he “who runs may read.” He hath, moreover, declared, that He would send it “strong delusions to believe a lie” ; and so infatuate its ambition, that it should unwittingly sow the seeds of its own dissolution ; and, in administering its poison, should warn the patient of his danger, and of the consequences of submission to its sway.

DIALOGUE VI.
OF INDULGENCES.

ORTHODOX.

INDULGENCES were the immediate cause of the Reformation. The Council of Trent, therefore, spake very cautiously concerning them, and modern Roman writers have adopted the same course : many, indeed, appear to know neither their use nor benefit. Here again comes in the question of satisfaction ; and some other points before considered.

PHILODOX.

You have allowed that remission of sins cannot be obtained, except by strict and entire satisfaction. Now, as before remarked, they maintain, that although the essential guilt and eternal punishment of sin are expiated to a justified man by the blood of Christ, yet there is a certain temporary punishment reserved for him to undergo, or make satisfaction for in this world, or in purgatory, or both. The Church hath power to mitigate this, wholly or in part, by what is called an indulgence, which

prescribes certain satisfactions to be done by works of penance.

ORTHODOX.

Temporal punishment may be and is inflicted in this life, even upon the justified sinner, either as just retribution, or natural effect, or fatherly correction, or examples of divine justice. But that the penitent can, in anywise satisfy God, by patient submission to or voluntary infliction of punishment, or do any thing expiatory, we deny.

PHILODOX.

But it is asked, "Because we cannot acquit ourselves of the entire debt, are we not to make some efforts to pay as far as our means afford?"

ORTHODOX.

The argument is not good. Men have nothing but what they receive from God; Peter cannot pay Paul, if he hath no means to do so without borrowing from Paul. The comfort of the Gospel is, that it declares sinners, upon faith and repentance, "reconciled to God, through the death of his Son"; and that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself? And how? by "not imputing their trespasses unto them." The Christian consolation is, that "being justified by faith, we have peace

with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But this peace of mind is not for him who still knows a vast portion of his debt to be undischarged ; a heavy account lying against him to be paid by his own imperfect obedience, and the bitter pains of purgatory. St. Paul places the blessedness of the sincere believer in this, that " his unrighteousness is forgiven, and his sin covered, and that the Lord will not impute his trespasses to him." How is this true, when a vast portion of the sin remains still imputed to, and exacted from him ? When we talk of having done satisfaction to a person, it implies that we are accepted by, reconciled to, and at friendship with, him. Which of these is left undone by Christ ? The faith, attested by obedience, which reconciled and made Abraham the " friend of God ", reconciles all who are the spiritual seed of Abraham. *Personal* satisfaction reconciles man to man ; *vicarious* satisfaction reconciles man to God.

But before we speak of Indulgences, it is necessary to understand, if possible, what they mean.

PHILODOX.

We have their benefit stated in the recent Jubilee Bull of Pope Leo XII., from which it appears that they are efficacious ; I. " For remission of canonical

penance"; II. For "remission of the temporal punishment due to the divine justice for past sins"; III. To "afford succour to such as have departed real penitents in the love of God, yet, before they had duly satisfied, by fruits worthy of penance, for sins of commission and omission, and are now purifying in the fire of purgatory; that an entrance may be opened for them into that country, where nothing defiled is admitted." These indulgences are granted, by applying portions of a stock, consisting of the merits of Christ, and of the superfluous merits of the saints, laid up at the pope's disposal. Thus he tells us, that he grants Indulgences, "by virtue of the authority given to us from heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure, composed of the merits, sufferings, and virtues of Christ our Lord, of his Virgin Mother, and of all the saints, which the Author of salvation has entrusted to our dispensation."

ORTHODOX.

It seems then, that the Church has the power of making herself umpire between the Creator and his creatures; of compromising the debt due from man to God; and of letting off the sinner from paying what he owes to the divine justice.

PHILODOX.

The deficiency, you see, is made up out of the stock of merits of Christ and the saints.

ORTHODOX.

If this be so, what does St. Paul mean by asking, "Was Paul crucified for you"? or why is it not true that "the saints, as well as Christ, suffered for us"? Are we again to yield the faith to Unitarians, and admit that the doctrine of the atonement is not to be established by the strict application of such phraseology to our Lord alone; adopting their unholy language, that good men are saviours as well as Christ.

PHILODOX.

Does not St. Paul say, "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church"?

ORTHODOX.

There is a wide difference between suffering for the good of others and satisfying for the sins of others. By the "afflictions of Christ", are meant not His personal afflictions, but those which he suffered in his mystical body, the Church, and of

which St. Paul, in his flesh, underwent so great a part. The following is the exposition of St. Anselm—" *I fill up those things which are wanted; wanted, where? In my flesh; for in that flesh of Christ which the virgin bore, no afflictions are wanted; but there yet remains a part of his afflictions in my flesh, which I suffer for his universal body's sake, the Church. For if I ceased to instruct believers, I should not have to bear these sufferings from unbelievers. But because I am ever zealous to benefit the Church, I am always necessitated to endure adversity.*"

PHILODOX.

But the Council of Trent teaches, that these "satisfactions are efficacious through the blood of Christ alone."

ORTHODOX.

What is this but to say, Christ merited in order for men to merit? He satisfied *once in one way*, that we might satisfy *many times in many ways*. He satisfied perfectly FOR us, that he might satisfy imperfectly IN us. He satisfied for eternal punishments himself: but he satisfied for temporal punishments only when men satisfy for themselves, or others for them?

PHILODOX.

Surely “ a sovereign, in shewing mercy to a capital convict, may either grant him a remission of all punishment, or leave him subject to some slighter punishment. May not the Almighty do the same ? ” *

ORTHODOX.

It is not for us to say what the Almighty *may* do. ‘ Our inquiry is, what *hath* he done ? Hath he not forgiven the guilt and punishment of sin to all that are in Christ Jesus ; who, “ by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified ” ? God is said freely to pardon the repentant sinner : but the sovereign does not freely pardon the culprit whom he punishes, or from whom he demands satisfaction. The parallel, moreover, between the court of heaven and a court on earth, is defective in this important point ; the earthly sovereign and the injured party are different persons ; nor can the sovereign equitably forgive to a culprit what is equitably due to the injured party. But here, God is at once the sovereign and the offended party. Who is to commute between Him and his creature ? “ If”, saith Eli, “ one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him ; but if a man sin against the

* End of Controversy, L. XLII.

Lord, who shall entreat for him?" "He is not a man as I am", exclaims Job, "that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any umpire between us, that might lay his hand upon us both."

PHILODOX.

"But many instances occur of God's remitting the essential guilt of sin, and eternal punishment due to it, and yet leaving a temporary punishment to be endured by the penitent sinner"; as the sentence of spiritual death was remitted to our first parents, but not of temporal death. When Nathan said to David, "The Lord hath put away thy sin", he added, "nevertheless the child born unto thee shall die"; and other instances there are of a like kind.

ORTHODOX.

If death be the "temporal punishment" of sin, the example of our first parents and all their posterity would prove, that it remains unrepealed either by God or man. But "*the wages of sin is death.*" Death is rather the hire, the lot of sin, than its punishment. The promise to the believer is, that "he shall never die." The transit from this life is not the death of the soul, but its departure, its temporary dissolution from the body, and is spoken of

rather as a mercy, than a punishment*. Neither are we arguing, that as cause produces effect, so sin sometimes retains an inherent penalty in this world, after the sinner may, by the testimony of a holy life and reformed mind, satisfy himself that the eternal punishment is pardoned. The reformation of a libertine does not always restore his broken constitution to its pristine health; and many a converted sinner has reason to say with the Patriarch, "Thou writest bitter things against me; thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth." —But what are those consequences of sin which remain after the eternal penalty is remitted? Death, disease, poverty, dishonour, ruined reputation. Now, if these are the "temporal punishments", and to the "remission of temporal punishments", indulgences are effectual, why are they not applied to these which really and evidently subsist?

The so often ill-understood example of David bears little upon the point. He was an adulterer and a murderer, and as such worthy of death. Though a king, he was amenable to the express penalties of the law of Moses. Convicted of his horrid crimes, both his crown and life were forfeited: and nothing could have set aside the forfeiture, but the special interposition of God; whose

* Gen. iii. 22.

saving promises in the house of David were not to fail through the sins of an individual. Upon his confession of penitence, he is exempted from the immediate penalty of his crimes ; and, as Josephus rightly understands the language of the prophet, “ his life and kingdom are preserved.” But the interpretation which supposes those dreadful acts of deliberate and long indulged atrocity, to be instantly forgiven, the guilt washed away, and the eternal punishment repealed, by the mere utterance of a few words of contrition, I can neither see, nor believe, to be conveyed in the words of Nathan. Read the fifty-first Psalm, written after the interview with the messenger of God. It is not the grateful and humble acknowledgement for pardon undeserved, but it is the effusion of a terrified awe-struck soul ; still conscious that the sin of “ blood-guiltiness ” hung heavy over him, and imploring mercy and forgiveness. The *legal penalty* was repealed, and, doubtless, the eternal punishment in the divine mind which knoweth the heart : but that the *temporal* punishment was forgiven is in no wise apparent. David was saved from actual death is true ; but only to suffer more severely by the accumulated miseries that pursued him to his grave, in the accomplishment of the sentence, “ The sword shall never depart from thy family.” If, therefore,

this proves that a temporal punishment remains, after the eternal is removed, it proves still further, that such temporal punishment can be done away by no satisfaction or indulgence. That God makes examples upon earth; that he deters from sin by sufferings, is allowed on all hands. But sufferings cannot compensate for sins; nor can an act of obedience satisfy for disobedience. We suffer, in order to be amended, to be prepared for a better state; we are chastened to be fitted for glory, that the "peaceable fruits of righteousness may be yielded in those who are exercised thereby."

PHILODOX.

Indulgences appear to be misunderstood. "An indulgence never was conceived by any Catholic to be a leave to commit a sin of any kind. No Catholic ever believed it to be a pardon for future sins. An indulgence, according to the doctrine of the Church, is not and does not include the pardon of any sin at all, little or great, past, present, or to come. Hence if the pardon of sin is mentioned in any indulgence, it means nothing more than the remission of the temporary punishments annexed to such sin."*

ORTHODOX.

It is unpleasant to be obliged to deny the accuracy

* End of Controversy, L. XLII.

of the whole of this statement. You say, "An indulgence never was conceived by any Catholic to be a leave to commit sin of any kind, or to be a pardon for future sins; nor does it include the pardon of any sin little or great, but only the temporary punishment."—Now whom are we to believe in this case? Our English Romanists, Gother, Milner, &c., or the Popes and the indulgence itself? How may we know what an indulgence is, but by the practice of the Church? If the king grants a pardon to a malefactor, if all his officers obey it, if the judges admit its legality, if no law militates against it, if no branch of the legislature arraigns it, are we nevertheless to believe that it is no pardon, and that it was illegally conferred, because some private attorney may think proper to expound it so? Is not the Pope the executive of the Church? Does not the Pontiff now in the chair tell you that it is at his pleasure "to unlock the sacred treasury", and issue indulgences, &c.? Does not the entire Church allow them? Do not all his "venerable brethren, patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and bishops," receive them, and the whole priesthood dispense them for the spiritual benefit of the people?

Suppose one or two divines may say otherwise than the Church has said; or may sincerely question the legitimacy of some indulgences; their voice is no

more to be heard than that of a country lawyer, who should insist that the king has granted a false pardon; and that the privy council, judges, and parliament, know not what a royal pardon really is. How are we to understand a grant, but by the terms of the grant? If the sovereign issues a pardon to a malefactor, granting him plenary remission of all his crimes, is it null because a private magistrate or constable may say, "Notwithstanding this pardon purports to be a full pardon, yet it is not a full pardon; it exempts you from transportation, but it does not exempt you from being sent to the hulks; in fact, it is no pardon at all, unless you do such and such things"?

But "an indulgence is not a leave to commit sin of any kind." Not in precise terms truly; but if it releases the punishment of sin, it is virtually, and to all practical intents, "a leave to commit sin." This is clear, because, if it "includes the pardon of any sin at all, little or great, past, present, or to come, or repeals the temporary punishment," it does so far license sin. And their denial, that an indulgence does anything of the kind, may, by the most decisive evidence, be refuted.

Endless are the indulgences granted by councils and popes, including the "pardon of sins past,

present, and to come." The first general Lateran Council granted "remission of sins to whoever shall go to Jerusalem, and effectually help to oppose the infidels."* The fourth Lateran Council granted the same indulgence to those "who set themselves to destroy heretics." Boniface VIII. granted, "not only a full and larger, but the most full pardon of all sins", to all that visit Rome the first year in each century. Clement VI. decreed, that they who should, at the jubilee, visit such and such churches should obtain "a most full remission of all their sins": and he not only granted "plenary absolution of all sins to all who died on the road to Rome", but also "commanded the angels of Paradise to carry the soul direct to heaven." Boniface IX. granted indulgences "a poena et a culpa", from the punishment and guilt of sin. Do all these include remission of sins, "past, present, and to come"? or do they discharge the "temporary" punishment alone, when the effect is to release the "guilt", and command the angels to take the indulged direct to heaven?—What is the meaning of that indulgence on the remarkable monument of the Leghs in St. Michael's Church at Macclesfield; on which we read, "the pardon for saying of v.

* Can. 11.

pater nosters, v. aves and a creed, is 26 thousand yeres and 26 days of pardon”?

If, to violate vows be a sin, and a pardon beforehand be leave to commit sin, then was “leave to commit sin” granted to all the kings and queens of France in succession by that indulgence of Clement VI. in which he says, “We, by apostolical authority, by the tenor of these presents, indulge for ever to you and your successors, who for the time being shall be kings and queens of France, and to every of you and them, that such confessor as any of you and them shall think fit to choose, may commute for you and them such vows as you may perhaps have made, or which by you or your successors may hereafter be made (the ultramarine vow, that to St. Peter and St. Paul, and that of chastity and continency excepted), and also such oaths by you taken, or by you and them hereafter to be taken, *as you and they cannot conveniently keep*, into other works of piety, as he may see expedient for the health of your and their souls, agreeable to God. Be it therefore unlawful for any man whatever to infringe this grant, or rashly oppose it. If any man presume to attempt it, he shall incur the indignation of Almighty God, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul.”*
—If then to discharge men (particularly monarchs,

* Dacher, Spicileg. T. III. 724.

upon whose public obligations national honour and safety depend), from their vows and oaths, when it is "not convenient to keep them", be not leave to commit sin, what may be called so? And if such indulgences be not "for sins past, present, and to come", by what words may a licence of the kind be expressed?

There are also what are called "stationary indulgences", granted to those who visit the churches at Rome, &c.; and these extend to a million of years; a tolerable exemption from "temporary punishment". Now what can be the meaning of such indulgences? They cannot be mere relaxations of penance for a man's life; nor for purgatory, which ceases with the day of judgment. If a pardon for a million or for thousands of years, does not convey entire exemption from the consequences of sin, what does it convey?

Again, if indulgences do "not include the pardon of any sin, little or great", what is the meaning of the language "*a paena et a culpa*, from the penalty and the guilt"? If to absolve a man from the penalty and guilt of sin, be not to pardon him, what is pardon? And, if "remission of the temporary punishment due to sin", be not pardon of sin, what, again, is pardon? A great sin is what they call a "mortal" sin; and a little sin, a "venial"

one. But they have always held that "venial" sins are hereby pardoned, both as to the fault and the punishment.

PHILODOX.

An indulgence is, as I have said, a remission of temporary punishment, and of the satisfactions due to God : for "the Church believes and teaches, that her jurisdiction extends to this very satisfaction, so as to be able to remit it wholly or partially, in certain circumstances, by what is called an indulgence; which is not only a relaxation of canonical penance, but an actual remission by God himself."*

ORTHODOX.

Let us attend carefully to this. An indulgence is a "remission of temporary punishment, and of the satisfactions due to God"; which satisfactions, as they tell us, are "alms, fasting, and other good works." But what kind of divinity is that, wherein alms and good works are accounted "punishments", to be put in the balance against the agonies of purgatory? And what sort of a Church is that, which grants indulgences to release men from the penalty of doing good deeds acceptable to God? Are we to suppose that He confirms a release from the satisfaction due to himself, and from practical holiness: and that He authorizes the Church to ex-

* End of Controversy, L. XLII.

cuse men from their duties? Good works, it seems, are pains and penalties in Roman theology; but in that of scripture they are privileges, and delightful exercises of lively faith. According to this doctrine, heaven is to be secured by dispensations from practical righteousness.

PHILODOX.

You may not forget, that indulgences are not to be granted without "just cause: hence, no one can ever be certain that he has gained the entire benefit of an indulgence, though he has performed all the conditions."*

ORTHODOX.

Can there ever be "just cause" for dispensing with works of holiness? And who is to decide upon what is a "just cause", except he who has the supreme power to grant the pardon? Assuredly, no one. Bellarmin therefore allows, that the Pope may grant the greatest indulgence for the slightest cause; and gives, for an example, the plenary indulgences granted to all who stand before St. Peter's Church on Easter-day, when he blesses the people†. And if a man may "not be certain that he has gained the entire benefit of an indulgence", of

* End of Controversy, L. XLII. † De Indulg. i. 12.

what value is it, save to betray souls, by leading them to confide in a remission which may be at last a cheat and an imposture ?

PHILODOX.

St. Paul exercised such power in the case of the incestuous Corinthian.

ORTHODOX.

Upon his repentance, he released him from the bond of excommunication ; nothing more.

PHILODOX.

Have not indulgences been granted in all ages ?

ORTHODOX.

Ever bear in mind that the Roman religion is not so much a new religion as a perversion of the old ; a corruption of original truth, rather than an invention ; and a strange selection and compound of primitive Christian and Pagan tenets and practices. Papal indulgences are a prostitution of the strictness of the early believers. In the first times, severe penances were imposed upon offenders ; and when these had been well nigh undergone, and the conduct of the penitent satisfactory ; or when he seemed at the point of death, and displayed every feature of

sincerity; or in any other extreme case, the remainder of the penance was dispensed with, and absolution given. This was the sole indulgence known to the primitive age. It was a relaxation entirely ecclesiastical: it took not the future state into contemplation. It was not considered an actual remission by God himself, of any part of punishment. Clear is this from the language of that eminent disciplinarian, St. Cyprian; who, though he regarded this, as doubtless it is, an important part of Church government, yet so far from esteeming it to be a "remission by God," he leaves the effect of it with Him altogether in doubt. It was a matter of mere discipline. That indulgences, in any sense or kind, rested with the Pope alone, or that he was the sole dispenser of them, or that they were made up of the merits of Christ and the saints, there is not a shadow or glance of evidence in early Church history; but distinct, positive, abundant proof to the contrary. It is, in almost every particle, a modern fiction. The privilege of granting the old relaxations belonged inherently to each and every bishop, subject only to canonical control*. These indulgences were pious

* A bishop could not regularly grant a relaxation, save at the intercession, or with the consent of the people, who might otherwise be scandalized thereby. This is clear from the example of Therapius, a bishop, who, having hastily relaxed the

and edifying, to prevent the penitent "from being eaten up with over-much sorrow": of primitive authority, and conformable to divine law. Roman indulgences are vain things, false, deceitful, novel, and injurious to Christ. Disgraceful are they in themselves, and most hurtful to the interests of morality and religion.

PHILODOX.

The "Declaration of the Catholic Bishops" says, these indulgences "have been exercised from the earliest ages."

ORTHODOX.

Another assertion, which, if it be true, all history is fable, and their best learned writers false. Mark the language of Cardinal Cajetan, the same who was employed as Legate of Rome to confer with Luther: "If we could have certainty of the beginning of indulgences, it would help us to search out the truth; but no sacred Scripture, no written authority of ancient doctors, Greek or Latin, hath brought this to our knowledge; but this only, from three hundred years, is it written of the old Fa-

penance of a lapsed presbyter, was severely censured by his primate, St. Cyprian, who did not, however, rescind the act, "being of opinion that the peace of the Church, given by any bishop, is not to be taken away." Ep. ad Fidum.

thers, that St. Gregory brought in stationary indulgences.”* “Indulgences”, says Prierias, writing against the same great Reformer, “are not made known to us by authority of Scripture, but by that of the Roman Church and Pöpes; *which is a GREATER authority.*”† This master of the Papal palace speaks out, and minces not the subject. Let us further hear the confession of our own countryman, the learned Cardinal-bishop Fisher: “It is not sufficiently manifest from whom indulgences had their origin. Of purgatory there is very little or no mention among the ancient Fathers. So long as there was no care about purgatory, no one sought indulgences; for on that depends all the value of indulgences. Indulgences, therefore, began after people had trembled awhile at the torments of purgatory.”‡ Similar is the confession of Durandus, Antoninus, Alphonsus à Castro, Major, and the ablest defenders of their Church. Indulgences, such as those of Rome, were unknown until within these seven hundred years.

The observations of their own Erasmus are remarkable:—“I will not here contend with those who deny that satisfaction pertains to penance.

* Opusc. T. I. Tr xv. c. 1. † Cont. Luth. Pa. Ind.

‡ Art. XVIII. cont. Luth.

God alone, they say, remitteth sins, and to whom-ever he remits the guilt, to him he also remits the penalty; for by charity and the Holy Spirit is that culpability dissolved, which being discharged, nothing remains, save to increase more and more in love. Hence they infer, that the indulgences of Popes cannot relax penalties, except such as man hath or may inflict; and not even those, save for weighty causes. As I would not condemn entirely papal relaxation, so do I judge it more safe to hope for plenary remission of sins from the love and mercy of Christ, than from human grants. If charity be wanted, what doth a bull avail? If that be completely present, a bull is superfluous; if imperfect in any part, they deny that it can be pardoned by the Pope, which belongs to God alone. *Of indulgences, the sacred writings say nothing; nor, indeed, the ancient doctors of the Church. Later divines always varied in their opinions on this subject, and spake perplexedly and doubtfully.* But what they assert, let themselves look to: it is beyond doubt that we have one evangelical indulgence:—‘her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much.’”*

The scandalous use of these indulgences, the

* De Modo Confitendi.

constant, regular, uncensured practice of selling them at pleasure, fills not merely Protestant invective, but the constant deprecation of their own writers, especially about the era of the Reformation. The Pope sold them wholesale to the best merchant! who again retailed them regularly throughout Europe! Where was the pretended zeal for Christian purity when the world rang with the immorality, vices, and ruin of religion, produced by indulgences? The "*Centum Gravamina*" is not the angry effusion of Protestant controversialists, but the deliberative exposition of the princes of the German empire in public diet. Now, what says this memorable document?—Their Third Grievance is, "of the increase of the intolerable burden of indulgences, when, under show of piety for building Churches, or an expedition against the Turks, the Pope sucks the marrow of their estates; and, to heighten the imposture, by their hireling criers and preachers, Christian piety is banished; while, to advance their market, they extol their wares for granting of wonderful, unheard-of, positive pardons; not only of sins already committed, but of sins to be committed by those who are alive, and of the sins of the dead. . . . By sale of these wares, together with being stripped of our money, Christian piety is extinguished; whilst any one may promise him-

self impunity, by paying the tax set upon the sin he has a mind to commit ; hence fornications, incests, adulteries, perjuries, murders, thefts, and all manner of crimes, are at once engendered. What wickedness will mortals fear to commit, when they may promise themselves licence and impunity of sinning while they live ; and for a little more money, indulgences may be bought for them after they die"? The Fifth Grievance is, " that the Pope, Bishops, and Pillars of the Roman Church, have always some reserved cases, for which you must make a fresh bargain, and pay more money, or no dispensation." The Sixth, " that if any one has wherewith to pay, he may not only be indulged in a present transgression of these constitutions [about reserved cases], but he may be permitted to transgress them in future ; whence those who are dispensed with, take occasion to commit perjuries, murders, adulteries," &c. This is the manifesto of the German princes ; this was the practical authorized divinity of the Church of Rome ; and, never be it forgotten, for opposition to this, Luther was and is an excommunicated heretic from the fold of Christ.

Yet "the Catholic Church rejects with abhorrence the imputation, that by granting an indulgence, she grants permission to commit sin, or a pardon for sins to come": so says the "Declaration"; and "no Catholic ever imagined any thing of the kind";

adds Dr. Milner. But if the examples I have given will not suffice, look at their official records; the “Tax-book of the Apostolic Chancery”, and of the “Sacred Penitentiary”, alluded to by the princes above. In these books, absolutions for the grossest crimes were as regularly set to sale at specific prices, as catalogues of volumes are exposed upon our stalls, or commutations for taxes enumerated in our regular tax-tables.

PHILODOX.

It appears, that these books have “great variations, both as to crimes and prices,” and have “been frequently condemned by the court of Rome. The Pope’s Court of Chancery hath no more to do with forgiveness of sins, than his Majesty’s Court of Chancery has. If ever there was the least groundwork for these books, the money paid could only be fees of office, on restoring certain culprits to the civil privileges which they had forfeited by their crimes. When proceedings in Doctors’ Commons in a case of incest are suspended, fees of office are required: but would it not be a vile calumny to say, that leave to commit incest may there be purchased?”*

ORTHODOX.

There is in these books no “variation in crimes

* End of Controversy, L. xli.

and prices", except as some editions were, perhaps, less beastly than others; and as successive pontiffs exercised their right of varying fees. They have NOT "been frequently condemned" by the Church or "court of Rome", for they were issued by her orders and authority. The Council of Trent, though twenty-seven editions had then appeared, put them not in their index of prohibitory books. In 1570, a solitary edition was condemned, not by the Church, but by the King of Spain. At last, in 1596, one edition was censured at Rome, not simply, but as "corrupted by heretics". In 1786 and 1806, they were censured, but only "when corrupted by heretics". All the other editions remain undisputed, either as to authority or the source whence they issued.

The Tax-books in MS., now in the British Museum, were procured from the papal archives by Lord Oxford. Subsequently to the Reformation, they were sold publicly in the streets of Paris. The testimony of an eminent Romanist, Espenœus, though well known, may bear to be repeated. He says, "The accusations of Protestants might appear forged, were it not that this infamous book was then and before publicly exposed for sale; in which you may learn more wickedness than in all the summaries of all vices, and in which licence for

many sins, but absolution for all, is advertised to buyers. It is wonderful, that at this time, in this schism, so shameful an index of so many filthy and horrid crimes is not suppressed. I do not think, that in Germany, Switzerland, or any other parts that have revolted from the Roman see, a more scandalous work is exposed. And it is so far from being suppressed by the favourers of the Roman Church, that licences and impunities for such and so great crimes, are in great part renewed and confirmed by the faculties of legates going about all parts." He proceeds with a story of abominations to which these dispensations extended *.

When, then, "his Majesty's Court of Chancery" issues tables of full absolutions for all sorts of crimes, with the prices annexed; when it employs officers to travel over England to proclaim, recommend, and sell them; when all the money thus collected goes directly and immediately into his Majesty's pocket, and this becomes the sole and entire motive for issuing them; then some parallel may be allowed between the cases. The same remark applies to Doctors' Commons.

* See a tract entitled "Taxatio Papalis", by a learned and pious friend of the author, (the Rev. J. Mendham,) who in this, as well as in his "Account of the Prohibitory and Ex-

This subject of Indulgences is most important to be understood, because we ought to know what was the heresy for which Luther was severed from the Church; and to recollect, that the approvers of that measure do virtually and de facto countenance and hold these horrible tenets, for opposition to which that glorious champion of outraged piety and morals was cast from their communion. I have forbore, therefore, to advert to Protestant evidence. Let Romanists speak for themselves on this point. And we will now close the discussion, after your attention has been directed to the brief account of the rise of the Reformation, from the pen of one of their most illustrious ornaments, Thuanus.

“The sin at that time prevalent in dispensing sacred duties, Leo X. soon increased by one far more heavy. For being in other respects voluntarily prone to all licentiousness, he, at the instigation of Cardinal Puccio, whom he too much favoured, and to get from all parts money for his vast expenses, sent bulls through the kingdoms of the Christian world, promising expiation of all sins and eternal life, at a certain price, to be paid by every one in proportion to the magnitude of the crime; and for that object, he constituted through the different purgatory Indexes”, has cast considerable light upon a curious but very important part of the papal controversy.

provinces, treasuries and tax-gatherers, with the addition of preachers, to extol among the people the importance of so great a benefit; and by skilful discourses and publication of books, to enhance beyond measure the efficacy of the thing. This was done with excessive licentiousness by the papal agents in all parts, but especially in Germany; where those who had farmed from the Pope the money to be raised, did daily, without shame, in brothels and in taverns, prostitute to the vilest uses the power of delivering the souls of the deceased from expiating fire. Then rose up Martin Luther, an Augustinian, Professor of Theology at Wittenberg; who, having first refuted, and afterwards condemned, the sermons of the preachers, proceeded, at length, so far, as to call in question the very power which, by these bulls, the Pope arrogated to himself; and, ultimately, as spirits increase by controversy, he descended to the examination of doctrine, which he affirmed to be corrupted by the lapse of time.”*

* Hist. V. i. p. 18.

DIALOGUE VII.

OF PURGATORY.

PHILODOX.

“ALL which is necessary to be believed on this subject is, the following brief declaration of the Council of Trent; “There is a purgatory, and the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful, particularly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.” *

ORTHODOX.

This is “all that is necessary to be believed.” So say their divines; because they account it the best policy to rest in generalities. Even as Socinians tell us, all that “is required of Christians” is this brief declaration, that “Jesus is the Christ”, and it is in no wise necessary to know what the term Christ implies. However, the Council of Trent commands the bishops to “take diligent care that the *sound doctrine concerning purgatory* be believed, taught,” &c.; and this sound doctrine is thus stated in the Trent catechism. “There

* End of Controversy, L. XLIII.

is a purgatory fire, in which the souls of the pious are expiated, being tortured for a definitive time.”*

But the decree of the Council of Florence is most worthy of attention, inasmuch as it is the only full authentic declaration of the Romish tenet respecting the future different states of men; and because it is part of the confession prepared for the signature of the Greek Church, at their temporary reconciliation. It runs thus,—“ The souls of true penitents, dying in the love of God, before they have brought forth fruits worthy of the repentance of their sins, are purified after death by the pains of purgatory; and they are delivered from these pains by the suffrages of the faithful that are alive; such as holy sacrifices, prayers, alms, and other works of piety, which the faithful do for the other faithful, according to the orders of the Church. And the souls of those who have never sinned since baptism, or of those who, having fallen into sins, have been purified from them in their bodies, or after their departure out of them, as we lately said, enter immediately into heaven, and purely behold the Trinity; some more perfectly than others, according to the difference of their merits. Lastly; the souls of those who die in actual mortal sin, or in original

* P. I. Art. 5. s. 3.

sin only, descend immediately into hell, there to be punished with torments, but not equally.” *

Now as heaven and hell are repeatedly the theme of holy writ, if there be a purgatory, it must alike form a portion of revealed truth, being of no less importance than the others.

PHILODOX.

“ To begin with the Old Testament. It is related in the second book of Maccabees, that the pious Judas sent twelve thousand drachms to Jerusalem to be offered for his soldiers slain in battle”; upon which the inspired writer concludes, “ It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.” Now, “ they claim a right of considering this book as canonical, because the Catholic Church so considers it, from whose traditions, not from that of the Jews, as Augustin signifies, the canon is formed. But Protestants venerate it as an authentic and holy record; as such, then, it bears conclusive testimony of the belief of the Jews before Christ.”

ORTHODOX.

The inspiration of this book is certainly denied by us, in common with the whole Hebrew Church,

* Dupin, C. xv. c. 3. Sgyropulus, S. v. c. 13.

with Christ and his apostles, the primitive Christians, the best councils, and the most learned and orthodox of the Fathers. If this book be inspired, then have we scriptural commendation of self-murder ; the suicide Razis being therein applauded, as one who “ chose to die nobly.” The writer, however, disclaims inspiration, by apologizing for the defects of his work ; speaking, says a learned prelate, “ in the diffident style of one conscious of the fallibility of his own judgment, and distrustful of his own powers.” If we “ venerate the book as authentic and holy record”, it is with considerable qualifications, as containing not a few palpable errors ; and therefore, as the same respectable writer remarks, “ it should be read with that discretion which, while it seeks instruction, guards against the intrusion of false and pernicious opinions.”*

PHILODOX.

Protestants do not reject the narrative respecting Judas altogether.

ORTHODOX.

By no means. But the examination of the story, compared with the Jewish laws, induces the opinion, that the author, who was a Greek, misunderstood

* Bishop Gray's Key.

the facts. Nor must we forget, that if his narrative be correct, and his remarks just, they harmonize not better with the Roman tenet than with ours. For, according to the history, Judas offered for those who had died in mortal sin. But they will not allow that this was a “good and wholesome thought”, to suppose that such could be “loosed from their sins”; since prayer avails only for those who die in a state of grace. If the historian proves any thing then, he proves too much.—There seems little doubt, that Judas did as the law of Moses required: he made a sin-offering, not for the dead, but for the living; for the congregation polluted by the guilt of those sinners. The narrator, better versed in Greek than Hebrew theology, misunderstood the circumstance; no uncommon case with historians.

PHILODOX.

But, proceeding to the New Testament; what is that place “called Abraham’s bosom, whither Lazarus was conveyed”?

ORTHODOX.

Not purgatory; not a place of suffering; but a place of actual enjoyment: for herein differed his state from that of Dives, “he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” But in the Roman divinity, the just and unjust, after departure, are both tor-

mented ; the one temporarily, the other eternally. The question of an intermediate state, where the souls of the righteous repose until the last day, is not in controversy. The Fathers generally held it ; most Protestant theologists have embraced it ; and it may appear that the language of holy writ upon the state of departed souls, and the solemnity of the day of judgment, is hardly intelligible without it. But the Fathers, and all who hold an intermediate state (Romanists excepted), maintain it to be a state of bliss and comfort, unalloyed, though not complete ; where “ the souls of the righteous, delivered from the burden of the flesh ” are, not in torture, but “ in joy and felicity ”. This opinion, so far from being reconcileable with purgatory, does most palpably contradict it. Their divines, therefore, to establish a dogma, which was never supposed by any but their own party, must argue thus ;—angels carried the disembodied soul of Lazarus to a place of comfort ; therefore the souls of the righteous go to a place of torment. The first Christians supposed that the departed spirits of the just pass immediately to a place of joy and felicity ; therefore they believed, that departed spirits go instantly to be punished in purifying fire.

PHILODOX.

Is it not of such a place as purgatory that our

Lord speaks ; “ I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite.”*

ORTHODOX.

What should we think of holy writ, if the certainty of heaven or hell was to be deduced from such passages only as are brought forward to prove purgatory? viz. a solitary commendation of an apocryphal writer, and one or two obscure texts of scripture, which a speculative brain may turn to any thing? Take the whole of our Lord's words together. If they refer to our spiritual state, they give a precept for something to be done, not after death, but in the present life, for our salvation. “ Give diligence, whilst thou art in the way”,—not after thy eternal lot is fixed :—which if thou neglect to do, the officer, Death, “ shall cast thee into prison, whence thou shalt not come forth till the last mite be paid ”; that is, thou shalt not come forth at all. I thought Roman purgatory was prepared, not for those who do not “ give diligence”, but for those who “ give all diligence to make their calling and election sure.” Is it not their divinity, that they who neglect salvation go not to purgatory, but to eternal punishment? The parallel text in St. Matthew refers the words of our Lord to

* St. Luke, xii.

those who die devoid of charity : but for such it is not purgatory that is prepared.—God grant us grace so to profit by his merciful warnings, as to “ give diligence ” not to depart without that sincere repentance, which nothing tends more to discourage than vain reliance on a death-bed, and upon something to be done for us after death.

PHILODOX.

“ I might here add, as a further proof of purgatory, that Christ, concerning blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, says, it ‘ shall not be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come ’; which words clearly imply, that some sins are forgiven in the world to come.”*

ORTHODOX.

Is not this an obvious mode of speech? Absalom “ spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad ”, i. e. he maintained a profound silence towards him†: “ turn not to the right hand nor to the left ”, i. e. turn not at all. But read the explanation in the parallel passage of St. Mark, in their own translation; he that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost “ hath not forgiveness *for ever*; but shall be guilty of an eternal sin.”

* End of Controversy, L. XLIII.

† 2 Sam. xiii.

PHILODOX.

St. Paul saith, "The day of the Lord shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."*

ORTHODOX.

This cannot be purgatory fire; for, it is not men that are to be purified by this fire, of which St. Paul speaks, but their "work"; not that of the just alone, but of "every man"; of all who are to appear at the judgment. But purgatory is not to "try" those who go there; they are tried before, and commended. Again, this burning is to be at the last day, which "shall be revealed by fire." But purgatory fire ends with the last day. The whole passage is evidently figurative; "He shall be saved, so as by fire", i. e. with great difficulty; a metaphor common in scripture. "Save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire", says St. Jude. "Ye were as brands plucked from the burning", is the expression of the prophets. Had the Roman teachers

* 1 Cor. iii.

heeded the solemn monition of St. Paul, in this entire passage, they, "holding the one foundation", never "would have builded thereupon" such an heterogeneous mass of "hay, wood, straw, and stubble", as the fabric of their Church presents; the merits of which shall be "tried" in the day "when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire." Many learned Romanists have blushed to quote these texts, and admitted that the doctrine is destitute of scriptural authority.

PHILODOX.

You have said, the Fathers held an intermediate state, but not a purgatory. Now, in refutation of this, it is affirmed, that, among others, "testimonies of St. Cyprian are numerous, of his belief of such a place." For instance, in "describing the difference between some souls which are immediately admitted into heaven, and others which are detained in purgatory, he says, "It is one thing to be waiting for pardon, another to attain to glory; one thing to be sent to prison not to go from thence till the last farthing is paid, another, to receive immediately the reward of faith and virtue; one thing to suffer lengthened torments for sin, and to be chastised and purified a long

time in that fire; another, to have cleansed away all sin by suffering, viz. by martyrdom.”*

ORTHODOX.

The passage referred to deserves consideration, as well from the authority of the writer, as because it is the only evidence, at so early a period, which even seemingly leans to this opinion. I. “Testimonies from St. Cyprian”, that there is a purgatory, are NOT “numerous”, but testimonies that there is not any purgatory ARE so, both from the strain of his discourses, and from explicit declaration. He believed that the peculiar lot of martyrs is an immediate access to the presence of God in heaven; and that all other holy persons pass, directly after death, into a state of sure and certain joy and happiness, not of purifying fires and torments. Thus, he says, “Upon our removal hence, there will be no place for repentance; no possibility of compensating sins by penitential satisfactions.”† And, “The righteous are carried off to a place of refreshment, whilst the wicked are hurried to their proper punishment.”‡ Again, “We should thankfully welcome that happy day which is to fix us each in our proper habitation; to rescue us from the varied

* End of Controversy, L. XLIII. † Ad Demet. s. 16.

‡ Of the Plague.

troubles of this world ; to disengage us from its several perplexities and snares ; and to restore us to a state of Paradise, and to the kingdom of heaven. Who amongst us, if he had long been a sojourner in a foreign land, would not desire a return to his native country ? Who, when he had begun to sail thither would not wish for a prosperous wind to carry him home with expedition ; the sooner to embrace his friends and relatives ? We ought now to account Paradise our proper home ; as we have already begun to reckon the patriarchs our fathers ; and ought, therefore, eagerly to hasten to the sight of our own country, to the embraces of our parents and dearest friends. There, friends, parents, brethren, children, without number, wait for us ; and long to congratulate our happy arrival : they are in secure possession of their own felicity, and want but the addition of our's to finish and complete it. How great must we then conceive will be our common joy, upon the transport of our meeting together in those blessed abodes.”*

II. St. Cyprian then was not a man so grossly to contradict himself, as his belief of purgatory implies. The extract to which you refer can be misunderstood by those alone who are unacquainted with his writings. The main controversy of that

* Of the Plague.

age was about the treatment of the "lapsed", those who had fallen from the faith during the persecution, and afterwards became penitent. Antonian, a prelate of Numidia, having heard that Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, had readmitted to his Church, after penance, some who had sacrificed to idols, wrote to Cyprian, expressing his opinion, that this indulgence would slacken the zeal of Christians to endure martyrdom, and his doubts of the propriety of communicating with Cornelius. It is in reply to this, that the passage in question occurs. Cyprian meets the objection of the Numidian bishop, and dissipates his alarm, by reminding him that the severe penances which the lapsed had to undergo before readmission, and the uncertainty of a ratification by God, rendered their case so obviously different from the glorious estate of martyrs, that there was no danger of zeal being thereby slackened. "You admit", he argues, "adulterers to penance for a certain time, and then restore them to the Church; yet the number of the continent is not thereby diminished, nor the resolutions of chastity weakened. It is one thing, at last, to stand waiting for a pardon, and another to enter immediately upon glory; one thing for a man to be sent to prison, and confined there till he has paid the uttermost farthing, and another to receive

forthwith the reward of his faith and constancy ; one thing for him to be cleansed from his sins, to be purified by fire, and another to have cleansed away all sin by suffering ; finally, it is one thing to wait with suspense for the sentence of our Lord in the day of judgment, and another to be presently crowned by Him without uncertainty or delay.” It is then apparent, that Dr. Milner has garbled the passage, as his custom was, and that it has nothing to do with an intermediate state of expiation. Those who go there do not “ wait for pardon” ; their pardon is already sealed. The martyrs had instant access to glory ; the penitents were still on earth, enduring rigid mortifications, and austerities, before they obtained even the pardon of the Church, and were then referred to the ultimate judgment of God ; of which no part agrees to the inhabitants of purgatory. True it is, he speaks of their being “ purified by fire”, not in a secret place after death, but in such a way as might be visible to deter others from apostasy. The martyrs had been tried by the fire of persecution ; the lapsed were to be purified from the stain of revolt by patient endurance of strict severities. St. Peter speaks twice of persecution under the same figure : “ think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you” : that “ the trial of your faith being much

more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire," &c. "Cyprian rightly", says his translator, "opposes the martyrs' state of security and perfect bliss in another life, to the uncertainties and afflictions of penitents in this."*

PHILODOX.

If the Fathers believed not a purgatory, why did they pray for the dead? An "inseparable connection there is between the practice of praying for the dead and the belief of an intermediate state; since it is evidently needless to pray for the saints in heaven, and useless to pray for the reprobate in hell."

ORTHODOX.

Whether the Fathers held it "needless to pray for the saints in heaven", or otherwise, this is certain, that they prayed for those whom the Church of Rome accounts in heaven; viz. the Blessed Virgin, the apostles, patriarchs, martyrs, &c. indiscriminately. They believed that the happiness of the righteous was not consummated till the last day; and they considered prayer for the fulness of

* Dr. Marshall's Cyprian, P. ii. p. 36. Some MSS. for "diu igne", by fire, read "divinè": and Bishop Fell conjectures that the proper reading is "diutinè", referring to their long continuance in penance. However, the common reading gives an obvious sense.

bliss to these, as little more than an amplification of the petition, "Thy kingdom come": they believed also that by these prayers, they kept up the "communion of the saints", maintaining an intercourse between those on earth and those in heaven.

PHILODOX.

Yet surely this was inconsistent?

ORTHODOX.

I am not arguing for the consistency, but stating the fact. It is, however, no more inconsistent, than to pray souls out of purgatory. Out of purgatory they will come whether prayed for or not; as the saints shall obtain their perfect consummation and bliss, whether we supplicate it or not. The objection seems to strike at the principle of prayer. When holy men in scripture are found imploring God to adhere to his word, to remember his covenant, to stand to his promises, and so on, is such language needless or improper, because it is certain his promises and covenant can never fail? What is prayer but the food of faith? Such is the frailty and weakness of our nature, that we are not certain of that of which we have no doubt. The blessings of religion are to the individual objects of faith and hope. Knowledge is certainty. We are

infallibly certain that salvation is for the faithful. But that you or I shall be saved is not of infallible certainty. Beware, therefore, and keep secure from the din of controversy, that which is the Christian's spiritual life. In the well known case of St. Augustin, who prayed for his mother, Monica, he declares himself assured of her salvation. Prayer for the dead can be repelled by one answer only : it is unwarranted in the word of God.

The history of the practice is brief. In the dawn of Christendom, at the celebration of the Eucharist, the names were read in each Church of such members as had departed in the faith of Christ, to give thanks for their holy departure*. This was done upon the anniversary of their death : and their names were enrolled among those of the saints, apostles, &c. As converts multiplied, and the persons became too numerous to be specified, it was restrained : and those most eminent for sanctity, bishops, &c. were recited at the altar on the diptychs or rolls of the Church. To this, subsequently, prayers and oblations were added. But all was for the benefit of the living, not of the dead ; for those of inferior holiness, who would most need prayers, were

* The practice is still partly retained in the Easter liturgy of the Moravians.

not mentioned; but those most eminent for sanctity, as the Holy Virgin, the apostles, and martyrs, were expressly named. For testimonies of this, you may turn to the old liturgies, and see who are there prayed for. As in that which is called St. James's, the prayer is, "Lord God of the spirits of all flesh, remember those of a right faith, whom we have mentioned, or otherwise; from righteous Abel down to this day: cause them to rest in the land of the living, in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in thy kingdom, in the delights of Paradise," &c. These early prayers contain several propositions adverse to Romanism.—Holding that the saints departed were yet members of the body of Christ, and imploring grace for all, through the one sacrifice which that Eucharist commemorated, they taught, that neither the holy virgin, nor any other, is free from sin, or from the want of that justifying blood shed upon the cross: that all the just depart into a state of rest and peace; and that saints may not be prayed to, inasmuch as one and all were prayed for.

PHILODOX.

Dr. Milner says, that Bishop Porteus is guilty of three "egregious falsities" in asserting that "purgatory in the present popish sense, was not heard

of for 400 years after Christ, nor received for 1000 years, nor almost in any other Church than that of Rome to this day."

ORTHODOX.

Had Bishop Milner been as cautious of asserting "egregious falsities" as Bishop Porteus was, his character for veracity would have stood higher than it does. If Dr. Porteus can be refuted, let them come forward, and produce their evidence. If he cannot, the "egregious falsities" must rest on those who spread them.

Purgatory was evidently borrowed from the heathen mythology; for whilst of this doctrine the word of God is totally silent, every part of it may be found in Homer, Virgil, Plato, &c. who are therefore brought forward by Bellarmin, as the highest authorities he could find. In the second century, a certain convert, brought up in Greek and Jewish fables, forged the Sibylline verses, where we meet with a fire, through which all that are to be saved must pass at the last day. The good Fathers, delighted to see a heathen poet proclaiming the mysteries of redemption, fell, with more piety than discretion, into the fancies of this imposture. Origen improved upon it, and carried it on to a denial of eternal torments altogether. Augustin, whose opinion is generally referred to on this subject, evidently speaks

as a man ruminating on some speculative notion, and unable to make up his mind about it. He hesitates and disputes, denies and affirms, and treats the whole as a problem which he perceived not clearly. And, at length, his words are, "it is not improbable" that there may be a purgatory. Therefore, it was then so far from an article of faith, that it exceeded not a probability: yet his purgatory is not that of Rome; for he supposes it to be a fire to take place at the last day. The first who dogmatically held such a thing was Gregory the Great, who grounds it neither on Scripture nor authority; but infers it because "the end of the world was then at hand." As the foundation is evidently baseless, the superstructure cannot be solid. But his purgatory is not by fire, but by hot baths. Ask this Pontiff how he ascertained the fact? his reply is, that some apparitions told him. In the next century our Venerable Bede discovered, that there are two purgatories, through one of which a river flows; and this, says Bellarmin, "is a very mild purgatory, and not improbable." Ask Bede, how he discovered this? an apparition told him also. These wandering spirits seem to be the common authors of Romish doctrines. Honest monks, dreaming in their cells, had forgotten the prohibition which forbids "to seek to the dead for the living", and refers us "to the

law and the testimony." It is not the mode of God's dealings with his people, "to send one from the dead" to preach new doctrines, but he directs us to "Moses and the prophets", to find out the "old ways."

PHILODOX.

But were the actual evidence deficient, there are many reasons, from the nature of things, for the truth of a purgatory.

ORTHODOX.

These cannot establish an article of faith. Christ hath "not brought life and immortality to light", to send us back to the obscurity of natural religion. However, what are these reasons?

PHILODOX.

Look at the cases of sudden death. "We are conscious, that there is not an instant of our life, in which this may not suddenly terminate, without the possibility of calling upon God for mercy."*

ORTHODOX.

Is life and death, then, a thing of chance? Does the all-seeing eye so slumber as to be surprised? Or does God allow his saints to be cut off unex-

* End of Controversy, L. XLIII.

pectedly from this world before He sees them fit for another? Does inspiration speak falsely, when it asks, "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days as the days of an hireling?" Are we to distrust that Providence, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being"; without whose permission "not a sparrow falls to the ground"? The objection is unworthy Christian lips. We may rest assured, that be it early or late, sudden or protracted, the fruit falls not from the tree before it be fully ripe in the eternal mind.

PHILODOX.

Reason declares, as well as Scripture, "that nothing defiled shall enter heaven."

ORTHODOX.

We are all by nature defiled and defiling. The soul must, then, be purified before it is admitted into the presence of that awful Being, who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." But it is not purgatorial fire in the next world, but divine grace, and the application of the merits of Christ in this, that purifies the souls of repentant sinners. They are "washed and sanctified" by the same power by which they are "justified"; even "in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—"If

we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to CLEANSE us from all unrighteousness." It is a gross derogation from the veracity of the evangelists and apostles, to suppose that, whilst they terrify unbelievers with threats of eternal torment, they hide from believers every thing that may dishearten and discourage them. The new covenant is founded upon this: "their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

PHILODOX.

Yet God does remember them. The most sincere penitent suffers for his iniquities, and the best of men are often afflicted.

ORTHODOX.

The present is a probationary state, and the only state of probation. The Almighty hath directly excepted this world from that dispensation where "sin and sorrow are unknown": and prepared his servants to sustain trouble here, by an assurance of certain rest after death. All scripture teaches, that the redemption of Christ is perfect, to whomever applied. Therefore to bring in an expiatory fire, and, which is the practical use of this doctrine, a string of human satisfactions, to purify those whom His blood hath cleansed, is a great depreciation of the boundless merits of Him, who "by himself purged

our sins." Holy writ draws a parallel between the work of creation and the work of redemption. As the Father rested not from his work until creation was complete; so neither did the Son enter into his glory until the work of redemption was perfected.

PHILODOX.

It is not denied, that our Lord *could* have expiated the temporal punishment. But has he done so?

ORTHODOX.

Has he not done so? Is the contrary opinion ever implied? Or is it not implicitly and explicitly contradicted by all those scriptures which speak of redemption as entire in all points; and of the dissolution of the faithful as an immediate entrance into peace? Take a solemn declaration of their own canon: "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them . . . They are at peace"*; which, upon the Roman hypothesis, is most untrue. The place of the just departed, is a place "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest." All Scripture echoes that voice from heaven: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, ἀπ' ἄρτι, 'from

* Wisdom, ii.

even now'; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours." Purgatory makes that promise to the converted sinner deceitful: "If the wicked will turn from all his sins, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him."*—"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, *none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him.*"†

PHILODOX.

Do you then maintain, "that our just and merciful Judge will not make a distinction in guiltiness"? To say that he will not, "is so monstrous a doctrine in itself, and so contrary to scripture, which says, 'he will render to every one according to his deeds,' that it seems to be universally exploded. The evident consequence is, that there are some venial or pardonable sins", to expiate which there is an intermediate state of punishment.

ORTHODOX.

WE certainly do not deny, that *some* sins are pardonable by God; for we maintain that *all* sins

* Ezek. xviii.

† Ib. xxxiii.

are so. They insist, on the contrary, that God pardons *mortal* sins, but not *venial* ones ; that *great* sins are done away through Christ, but that for *little* ones a man must satisfy for himself. Therefore, whether these sins are pardonable *by God*, or pardonable *in themselves*, is the nucleus of the dispute. They pretend the latter, and we deny it ; and wonder, that any one, in the face of scripture, should affirm it. The nature of sin consists not in the magnitude of the offence, but in this ; it is “ the transgression of the law.” In civil codes, no penal offence is venial, though the punishment of crimes be disproportioned by the variety of enactments ; and all may be pardoned by the sovereign. The very sin which “ brought death into the world and all our woes”, was apparently as small a sin as could well be conceived ; insomuch that the taunts of infidels are invariably levelled against the narrative which records it. Are not the dreadful effects of this little sin sufficient to silence so dangerous a tenet ?

PHILODOX.

That sin of Adam consisted in the violation of a positive precept.

ORTHODOX.

Does not all sin consist in the same, and its guilt arise from this ? “ Where no law is, there is no

transgression." To steal a pin is as positively prohibited by the eighth commandment as to rob a house. And "he that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all."

PHILODOX.

You adopt then the "monstrous doctrine", that all sins are alike, and all punishments, of course, equal.

ORTHODOX.

When that topic was urged at the Reformation, Calvin thus retorted: "How unfairly they calumniate this doctrine I am aware; alleging that it is that Stoical paradox of the equality of sin. But from their own lips be they convicted. For, I demand, of those sins which they confess to be mortal, do not themselves acknowledge that one is greater than another. Therefore, it follows not, that all sins are equal, because all are mortal."* And Bishop Fisher, writing against Luther, thus concedes to him: "In this point, that venial sin is venial by the mercy of God alone, I agree with you."†

PHILODOX.

Dr. Milner exclaims, "O how consoling are the belief and practice of Catholics in this matter, com-

* Inst. L. III. c. 4.

† Ass. Luth. Conf. A. 32.

pared with those of Protestants!—Their burial service is a cold disconsolate ceremony; and as to any further communication with the deceased, when the grave closes on their remains, they do not so much as imagine any.”*

ORTHODOX.

What “communion” the saints departed have with those below, God alone knoweth, and hath not revealed. Of one thing we are certain, that the bond which connects the present world with the world to come, and unites the mystical body of Christ together, cannot be dissolved by death; for over spiritual ties the grave hath no dominion.

But the feeling or the piety which accounts our burial service a “cold disconsolate ceremony”, is entitled to little honour. If it be “cold and disconsolate” to hear that inspired strain of comfort, wherewith St. Paul draws half aside the veil which overhangs the invisible world, and represents to us the sting torn from death, and the victory from the grave, “through our Lord Jesus Christ”;—if it be “cold and disconsolate” to commit to the last receptacle of mortality, the body of child or parent, husband, wife, or friend, “in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life”;—to commend the soul

* End of Controversy, L. XLIII.

into the hands of Him “with whom do live the spirits of those that depart hence in the Lord”; and to bid the mourner “sorrow not as men without hope for them that sleep in Jesus”:—if it be more “cold and disconsolate” to believe that those we love, delivered “from the miseries of this sinful world”, are in “joy and felicity”, and “at rest from their labours”; than to believe that their anguish is just begun in purifying fire;—we must be content to bear the reproach. It will not be the first sport of malignity that this most sublime and holy service has had to encounter. Returning from the silent house appointed for all living, we may “comfort one another with these words”; whilst they resort to the wretched fountain of human satisfaction and human merit, to rescue their beloved friends from pain and torture. But there is that within them which refutes their faith; or to the righteous the hour of death would be, not a source of consolation, but of wretchedness and gloom.

DIALOGUE VIII.

OF INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.

PHILODOX.

“THAT it is lawful and profitable to invoke angels is plain, from Jacob’s asking and obtaining the angel’s blessing with whom he had mystically wrestled; and invoking his own angel to bless Joseph’s sons.”*

ORTHODOX.

If to ask the blessing of an angel present, infers that it is lawful and profitable to invoke them absent, it follows, that we may lawfully and profitably invoke our parents, pastors, &c. from whom we are wont to implore benediction. We are told, that a zealous lay-advocate of the Romanists implored the blessing of a late pious Protestant bishop; and whatever his own Church may think of his orthodoxy herein, who shall censure the feeling which dictated the act? Yet I doubt whether this gentleman proceeds upon his principles, and invokes the spirit of the departed prelate.

That the angel whom Jacob invoked to bless his

* End of Controversy, L. xxxiii.

grandsons, was no created angel, but the Lord himself, the "Angel of the covenant", is implied in the terms of the invocation, which is addressed to a single personage: "God, before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, did walk; the God who fed me all my life long unto this day; the angel who redeemed me from all evil; bless the lads."—Is it not evident that the God before whom his fathers walked, who had fed him during life, was the Angel who redeemed him from all evil; even He who has been through every age the omnipresent Preserver and Redeemer of his people.

This is the unanimous exposition of the Hebrew and Catholic Church. "That Angel", say the Rabbins, "is the Redeemer, who is found in every redemption that is in the world:—the Shechinah, who always walks with man, and never departs from him."* And thus the champion of truth, St. Athanasius, announces the orthodox opinion: "Jacob did not couple one of the created natural angels with God who created them; nor, leaving "God who fed" him, did he ask a blessing from an angel upon his grandsons; but by naming him "that redeemed

* Quoted in Dr. J. P. Smith's *Testimony to the Messiah*, Vol. I. p. 345. This learned and able author, who carries caution almost to the verge of excess, hesitates not an instant to adopt the orthodox view of such passages as the above.

him from all evil", he shewed that it was not any one of the created angels, but the Word of God, whom he coupled with the Father, and prayed to*. "I have often *wondered*", says Allix, "how it came to pass, that most of the divines of the Church of Rome, who would seem to have the greatest veneration for antiquity, should so much despise it in this question, wherein the ancient Jewish and Christian Church do agree."† This erudite, but not always conclusive, writer, must have forborne to "wonder" when he considered how little Catholic tradition, opposed to the all-absorbing infallibility of the Church, avails with Roman divines.

I am not aware of more than three instances in the scripture of religious service paid to created beings: all occur in the New Testament; and all alike are reprehended. The first is, the homage of Cornelius to St. Peter‡; the others, of St. John to the Apocalyptic Angel§.

PHILODOX.

"But if the mere act was forbidden, then the three angels who allowed Abraham to bow him-

* Orat. 4. Cont. Arian.

† Diss. at the end of Test. of Jewish Ch.

‡ Acts, x.

§ Rev. xix. and xxi.

self to the ground before them, were guilty of a crime." *

ORTHODOX.

Were we to answer, that of these "three angels", one was that Jehovah before whom the patriarch pleaded for guilty Sodom, the sacred narrative and Catholic tradition would vindicate the exposition. We are not, however, disputing of "the mere act"; but of the *intent*. External signs of homage may or may not be religious. Bowing, prostrating, kneeling, &c. are tokens alike of civil respect, of moral reverence, or of religious worship. Both the former were due from Cornelius to St. Peter. If we could suppose that the humility of the apostle declined an excess of outward testimony from the grateful centurion; yet his *language* will shew that the homage paid was religious. "Stand up: I myself also am a man." To whom was civil or moral respect due, if not to "man"? The repulse proclaims the nature of the action. It was religious service; not supreme, for Cornelius knew that Peter was only an ambassador of God, but relative; the same in kind and degree with that paid by Romanists to the saints.

This derives added force from the error of St. John. He did not, as they pretend, mistake the

* Gen. xviii.

angel for Christ ; and so adore him with supreme worship. He had beheld Christ at the opening of his vision. The angel in whose presence he stood, he knew to be one of the “ seven angels ” ; he had held a long converse with him, which closed by the celestial messenger inviting him to the marriage-supper of the Lamb ; therefore he could not mistake him for the Lamb. But, in his ecstatic rapture, he paid him a reverence bordering on religious service. The angel shrank from it : “ See thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren. Adore God ” : as they translate the words. And when the beloved disciple forgot the monition, and offered again the like service, he was again rejected with the same reproof.

PHILODOX.

In adverting to the respect paid to the saints, you must allow that more than ordinary reverence and honour are due to the blessed virgin.

ORTHODOX.

All reverence and honour which intrench not upon the incommunicable glory of the Godhead are her due. But to ascribe to her that glory, is not to honour but to dishonour this “ lowly handmaid ” of the Lord.

PHILODOX.

Surely she who, by an angel, was declared “blessed among women”, and saluted “hail, full of grace”, may impart grace to others. With respect to the latter term, they allege that Protestants have perverted the original, by translating *κεχαριστωμένη* “thou that art highly favoured.”

ORTHODOX.

If the mere terms “blessed among women”, and “all generations shall call me blessed”, entitle her to religious homage, they seem to entitle Leah to a portion of the same*. To be pronounced “blessed among women, of all generations”, is a very different thing from being worshipped; the latter service we abhor, the former is cheerfully echoed in our Churches.

What they call a corrupt Protestant translation has no slight authority in antiquity, and is more conformable to the original than their own. That *χαριστόω* signifies “to bestow gratuitous favour”, themselves confess by rendering it, in the only verse where it is found, “he hath gratified us” †, which hath the same force, though less perspicuous, than our “made us accepted”. If then the active verb signifies to confer favour, the passive participle must

* Gen. xxx.

† Eph. i.

signify that on which favour is conferred. In their scriptures* it is asked, “Is not a good word above a gift? and both are with *νεχαριτωμένην*, a gracious man,” i. e. one highly favoured in the estimation of another. “The angel”, says Theophylact, “interprets himself, ‘thou hast found favour with God.’”†

We quarrel not with their rendering, which follows herein the venerable Syriac version and the Arabic, as well as the Vulgate. That the blessed virgin is “full of grace”, we doubt not; but that she can therefore “confer grace”, we deem an opinion derogating from the office of her eternal Son; for of Him alone may it be said, “of his fulness we have received.” The Giver of all grace is the Holy Spirit; and the fulness of his gifts conferred on Mary no more renders her the bestower of grace than St. John the Baptist, who was “filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb”; or than other sincere believers, for whom the apostle prays, that they may be “filled with all the fulness of God.”

So peculiarly does religious invocation belong to God alone, that it gives, by divine command, denomination to the place of Catholic devotion; “my house shall be called of all nations the house of

* Ecclus. xviii.

† Suicer.

prayer". So essential a part of piety it is, as to be put for the whole of religion; "Whosoever shall invoke the name of Jehovah, shall be saved."* The heathen are characterized as those who "invoke not the name" of Jehovah†. In "the day of trial, salvation is for those who invoke God."‡ The "sanctified" are they "who in every place invoke the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."§ This was the simple denomination of Christians at the opening of the Gospel. Ananias, speaking to Christ, describes Saul as the persecutor of them "who invoke Thy name."|| Believers are enjoined to imitate the conversation of those "who invoke the Lord out of a pure heart."¶ The first martyrs died not, as Romanists commend Christians to die, calling upon the holy virgin and the saints; but "invoking" the Saviour only; "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."**

Prayer consisteth not in the audible utterance of words, but in presenting to the throne of mercy, the feelings, trust, and confidence of the humble and contrite mind. And oft, like pious Hannah, the "lip moves, but the voice is not heard."†† It is that intercession of the Spirit, whose speech

* Joel, ii. Rom. x.

† Jer. x.

‡ Ps. l. xci, &c.

§ 1 Cor. i.

|| Acts, ix.

¶ 2 Tim. ii.

** Acts vii.

†† 1 Sam. i.

is “groanings which cannot be uttered.”—Prayer, therefore, is inaudible to created beings; and enjoined as due to God only, who alone reads the heart; alone can hear and perceive the motive whence it flows. The sense of this alike repels the hypocrite, and sustains the pious:

“ Safe in His power, whose eye discerns afar
The secret ambush of the specious prayer.”

In that comprehensive supplication offered by Solomon for himself and people, at the consecration of the Temple, the royal suppliant directs prayer to be offered to God alone; and implores forgiveness for every worshipper, “according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest; for Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men”; which is but the echo of what Usher calls that “golden sentence of his father David; ‘O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come.’”

If we seek precedent for prayer to any other than God, whether in the patriarchal, Hebrew, or Christian dispensation, all is silent. Example encourages it not; for precept forbids it. Though forms of prayer, public and private, abound in the Old Testament; though devotions of patriarchs, prophets, and saints are before us; no shadow of invocation to any mortal presents itself; neither to the leader

of “the glorious army of martyrs”, righteous Abel; nor to the “father of the faithful and the friend of God”, holy Abraham; nor to the prince of the “goodly fellowship of the prophets”, Moses; neither to Enoch, nor Elijah, translated to the throne of God; neither to just Noah, nor patient Job; neither to David, the man after God’s own heart; nor to Daniel “greatly beloved”; neither yet to Gabriel, who standeth in the presence of God; nor to Michael the deliverer; nor to any other angel or archangel, martyr or saint, patriarch or prophet, is devotion used. Here then, in this greatest daily duty, prescription of the ancient Church of God rebukes the practice of the Romanists.

If we enter upon the Christian revelation, which brought clearer light to “fulfil the law”; which came “utterly to abolish idols”, and to build upon the foundations of pure religion a spiritual service; to annihilate the pagan worship of deceased heroes and benefactors; to withdraw the mind from human dependence, and fix it upon God; to substitute, for dead mediators, One ever-living and all-sufficient in love and power;—in the records of this dispensation, the former worship of the faithful is confirmed by mightier sanctions: invocation is directed to God alone; the worship of aught besides is deprecated and condemned, and pointed out as peculiarly

characteristic of a fearful "falling off from the faith" which should devastate the Church "in the latter days."

If then prescription of the primitive and Hebrew Churches for four thousand years ; if the customs and obligations of the Church of Christ in her holiest days ; and if the examples of fathers, saints, and martyrs, of evangelists, apostles, prophets, and patriarchs, without interruption, be a guide to us ; if the precepts and directions of holy writ, requiring prayer to be addressed to Him only who readeth the heart, be a sure rule in this great duty ; if invocation is so supremely an act of religion, that every other is thereto subordinate, that believers derive their name from the exercise of it, that the simple designation of God's house is of all nations the house of prayer ; then is the doctrine of the Roman Church unscriptural and erroneous, her worship superstitious and idolatrous, and both equally alien to the word of God, and to Catholic tradition of unvarying course for well nigh three-fourths of the time since the creation of the world.

PHILODOX.

But are not these arguments levelled against what she neither teaches nor practises? She inculcates with you that supreme worship is due to God

only ; and that a relative and inferior worship alone is due to the saints. In fact, “ worship ” is a term of great ambiguity. It may signify the highest religious devotion, or the lowest civil respect ; as when you speak of “ his worship the mayor”, &c.

ORTHODOX.

We can scarcely be said to deny distinctions of service and homage, since our objections against Rome, on this point, are grounded upon them. If, as their argument runs, civil respect and religious service were the same in kind, and differed in degree only, the dispute might seem to resolve itself into a fastidious cavil, or mere logomachy. But they confound things essentially different. If their apology has any meaning, it is, that the worship paid to Almighty God and to the mayor of a city is the self-same worship, the difference being only that the former is supreme, and the latter inferior ; the excessive nonsense of which absorbs its irreverence.

Obedience and respect are due to certain of our fellow mortals, on account of some pre-eminence they possess, be it of authority or excellency. To the sovereign, *high* moral respect is due, and *supreme* civil homage ; and the same relatively, and in inferior degrees, to all who represent him in office

downwards. A moral and civil reverence is likewise due from children to parents, servants to masters, and in general to persons eminent in character, morals, and, above all, in holiness; and this, abstracting all consideration of jurisdiction or authority. A moral reverence is due, in a very high degree, to the angels of God, both on account of their spiritual nature, of their office and station, as the chosen attendants of the triune Godhead, and the messengers of his will, and of their guardianship over us as ministering spirits. High moral reverence, veneration, and honour, are due to the virgin mother of Christ, to the apostles, prophets, martyrs, and to all who have departed this life in the faith and fear of God. This reverence our Church discharges in dedicating two annual festivals to the blessed Virgin, and one to each of the other apostles, to the angels, and to all the saints collectively. Such respect Aquinas happily calls a "moral debt"; for reason repeats the injunction of St. Paul, "Render to all their dues; honour to whom honour is due." This "moral debt" is paid by acknowledgment of their excellencies, by grateful commemoration of their services, by venerating those whom God "delighteth to honour"; but more especially by imitating their conversation, walking by the same rule, and minding the same things,

“ in all virtuous and godly living.” But *religious service*, of all kinds, is due to none other than God, as the first and last principle of creation, preservation, and redemption. Unto Him “ to whom and of whom are all things”, religious homage, supreme or subaltern, absolute or relative, exclusively belongs ; insomuch that the worship which we are bound to pay to the human nature of our Lord is legitimized by its conjunction with the everlasting Godhead. For, it is to the “ man Christ Jesus”, in inseparable union with that eternal Word, who was “ in the form of God”, and “ equal with God”, that “ every knee must bow”; and thus is it that this worship redounds “ to the glory of God the Father.” He, therefore, who pays religious service to saint or angel, pays to the creature that which is due to the Creator only. The distinction between superior and inferior divine homage is an unmeaning figment, disowned by holy writ, and derived from the “ philosophy and vain deceit” which St. Paul condemns as the origin of that “ feigned humility and will-worship”, by which this error recommends itself to many minds.—“ Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

PHILODOX.

True. But the term here used by our Lord

(λατρεύειν) signifies the highest worship; they ascribe only δουλεία, which signifies inferior service, to saints and angels.

ORTHODOX.

This notion has often been shewn to be without foundation: for what our Lord expresses by the higher term, the Septuagint expresses by the inferior: “Put away the strange gods, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord; and δουλεύσατε, serve him only.”* If such a thing as inferior divine worship existed, it would here be intended; for it is in opposition to the service paid by the Israelites to the heathen deities, that Samuel speaks, which certainly was inferior, as they did not directly apostatize from the God of Israel. But, take the Roman interpretation, and St. Paul says, “When ye knew not God, ἐδουλεύσατε, ye did inferior service to them which by nature are no gods”; of course, now ye know God, ye are to pay it no longer to any who “by nature are no gods.” And again, “ye turned to God from idols, δουλεύειν, to pay inferior worship to the living and true God”; therefore to pay it to any other, is to return to the state of heathens. If then there is any thing in the distinction, it rather strengthens than weakens our objection.

* 1 Sam. vii.

Revelation was given to “enlighten the dulness of our blinded sight”, in things pertaining to God. By this we are taught the service, which, through the mediatorial sacrifice, shall be accepted of Him. “Therefore,” as Bishop Davenant observes, “all necessary duties and works of religious service, do so depend upon the will of God revealed in his word, that those things which have no foundation in his word, are adverse to the divine will.” Even at that early time of the entrance into Canaan, when so small a part of scripture was extant, the ordinance for religious duty was thus peremptory; “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”* In things indifferent, much may be left to time and place, regulated by discretion; but in the point of right obedience to God, we have no guide but His revealed will. Few things can be more clearly laid down than this; what is uncommanded is unacceptable. “Who hath required this at your hands?”—“In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” To invoke God through the “one Mediator”, is commanded: to that, promises of mercy and acceptance are given: “If ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will

* Deut. xii. 32.

give it you.”—“ Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”—The sentence of the universal Church for about five thousand years, may be expressed in the language of Augustin : “ To pray otherwise than God hath taught, is not ignorance alone, but sin.”

PHILODOX.

They fully admit that Christ is the only Mediator of redemption. But if you argue, “ that there is no other Mediator of intercession ”, do you not condemn the command of the Almighty, when he directed Job to pray for his friends ; and the custom of St. Paul, in soliciting the prayers of the Churches ? Nay, is it not the practice of all Christians to pray for, and solicit the prayers of each other ? But those who intercede by prayer are mediators of intercession.

ORTHODOX.

This is the veil spread over the minds of many. It is a slender one ; and yet the best that may be found. You make again a distinction where scripture distinguishes not. When St. Paul says, “ there is one Mediator ”, it is a “ Mediator of intercession ” that he is speaking of ; for, having exhorted us to pray and supplicate for each other, he adds, “ for there is one God, and one Mediator between

God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all"; teaching us, that he who alone ransomed, is the alone Mediator of intercession, through whom our supplications are received. The office of Mediator of redemption expired when He ascended on high, and His all-sufficient atonement was accepted of the Father. He is now no more "Mediator of redemption", other than as he is the Mediator of intercession. Having humbled himself to the death upon the cross, "He is exalted to be a prince and a saviour, who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

PHILODOX.

The Spirit is also said "to make intercession for us"?

ORTHODOX.

But it is that eternal Spirit, one with the Father and the Son, "by whom Christ offered himself", and in and through whom his mediation is carried on; since it is He who helpeth our infirmities, putteth into our minds good desires, and enableth us to bring the same to good effect. St. Paul, indeed, does adopt the term "intercessions", to signify the charitable prayers which men offer up for each other; but he never uses it in the forensic sense, implying that the advocate hath something meritorious to

offer for his client, of any but Christ ; differing herein from the Roman custom.

What is proved by the examples of Job and St. Paul ? They did, as all do, pray for, or solicit the prayers of others. You do not suppose that, in condemning the invocation of saints, we condemn our own constant practice ?

To entreat the prayers of our living brethren, we have a command of God ; to invoke those who are departed, we have no command, but rather the contrary. If this was the sole difference, it would be sufficient to enforce the one and repel the other. “ If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.” Conformity to the divine precept is the only well-grounded hope that He will hear us.— Neither do we supplicate our friends as intercessors, entreating them to present their merits upon our behalf ; but we solicit them to go with us in heart, and mind, and prayer, to the common Intercessor. We know also that our friends hear our prayers ; we can go to them, tell them our cares ; they can sympathize with us. But we know not that the dead have a lively sense of the sorrows of those who survive. That the departed spirits of the just will render every office of charity which their state admits, we may infer from analogy, perhaps from scripture ; but all beyond is “ clouds and

darkness." That they should have a sympathy with the miseries of this world of sorrow and perturbation, seems scarcely reconcileable with a state of happiness. St. Augustin asks, "If good Josiah could after death hear the din of war within the gates of Jerusalem, and see the desolations of his people, how was it promised in mercy that he should be previously gathered to his fathers, that "his eyes might not see the evil which God would bring"? How are "merciful men taken away from the evil to come", if a sense of evil still pursues them? Why does Isaiah say, that Abraham and Israel were "ignorant" of the distressed Jews, and "acknowledged them not", if they were yet acquainted with their sorrows?

PHILODOX.

Surely God is able to reveal to departed saints the prayers which Christians address to them?

ORTHODOX.

Hath he suggested that he will do so? Hath he not required us to invoke Himself directly? Where too is the coherency of your arguments? The apology for invocation of saints is, that prayer may NOT go immediately to God, but through the mediation of the saints; and that it is a fearful thing to apply directly to the Almighty. But your hypo-

thesis refutes this, and infers that prayer *does go directly* to Him. It also seems absurd, as may be seen by an old comparison. Suppose the king was the only person at court who could read, would you write to a courtier, entreating him to use his influence with his majesty for some favour, knowing that the letter must be carried to the king, who must first peruse the contents, and explain them to the courtier, who, having thus understood it, is to urge the request upon his majesty? Surely it would be more rational and respectful to apply directly to the sovereign, especially if you knew that he had appointed one distinguished personage to receive the requests of his subjects, with a promise that he would hear all who came through him.—Lastly, to solicit the prayers of our friends can scarcely degenerate into superstition or idolatry. We do not adore their goods, their chattels, or their cloaths; we do not make processions and pilgrimages to their houses; we fall not down before them, with every outward mark of divine reverence, entreating them to save us by their merits and intercessions; we use not any other of those appendages, which make the invocation of saints tenfold more objectionable in practice than it is in principle.

For we must come into closer contact. If Romanists, as their writers would have us believe, did no

more than entreat the saints to pray for them, although this would evince a contempt for scripture and tradition, though it would be unnecessary and superstitious, yet it could scarcely be accounted idolatrous; neither be said to thrust the Redeemer from his seat. But, unhappily, their arguments are altogether irrelevant; they vindicate neither the doctrine nor the practice of their Church, all whose "observances", rites, and customs are as binding on their consciences as her creeds and councils.

PHILODOX.

She is not to be judged herein by the devotional books of her private members, any more than the Anglican Church is to answer for every sentence in the meditative works of her divines, however justly she may venerate their general piety.

ORTHODOX.

We will not resort to the devotions of their private writers, but examine their breviary, psalters, liturgies, &c. sanctioned by supreme authority, and issued for the purposes of public and private worship. Much detail will be needless to prove that they do something more than merely entreat the saints to pray for them. Rome addresses the saints as she addresses the Redeemer. She employs the

same terms, ascribes the same privileges, imputes the same benefits, performs the same actions, to them as to Christ. Does she pray for salvation through His merits and intercession? So she does through those of St. Nicholas. Does she pray to ascend into heaven through the blood of Christ? So she does through the blood of Thomas à Becket. Does she beseech Christ for admission to heaven? She beseeches St. George for the same. Does she implore Christ for life, and aid, and comfort? So she does many of the saints. With respect to the holy virgin, there is scarcely an attribute peculiar to the Almighty, scarcely a blessing or grace that God can give, which is not addressed to her. She is joined with God himself. Blessing is implored from Mary and her Son. Glory is ascribed to Mary together with the Holy Trinity. She is prayed to for protection, deliverance, benefit, &c.; in short, it would fill a volume to compress the devotions and ascriptions with which this lowly handmaid of the Lord has been honoured, or rather profaned.

There is not an ordinance or sacrament unpolluted by this Pagan practice. Rome directs her people to confess their sins equally to God, to the angels, the virgin, and the saints: to them she commends departing souls; in their name she exorcises, in their name she excommunicates, in their name

she absolves. To them she consecrates churches and altars; to them she makes vows, which are expressly and repeatedly limited in scripture to God alone. Nay, even worse, if worse there be, the sacrifice of the mass itself, the meritorious offering up of the Son of God to his Father, is regularly transacted in honour of St. Paul, St. Benedict, St. Becket, or some other; a blasphemous practice, spoken of, in terms of deserved indignation, by one converted from their faith by his own convictions*.

* “ ‘As error is the mother of blindness’, and ‘one deep calleth to another’, and as the entire aim of Satan is to draw men to impiety, and to the destruction of the kingdom of Christ;—whereas in the primitive Church, they made offerings to none but God, and celebrated the sacrifice of the holy sacrament to the honour of the divine Majesty alone;—the Roman Church has carried error to such an excess as to maintain, that the sacrifice of the mass, in which they suppose Christ himself to be really sacrificed; that this sacrifice, I say, of the body and blood of Christ really and substantially present, is offered (dare I repeat this blasphemy?) in honour of the saints. And as a priest is preparing to say mass, one comes and says coolly, ‘Sir, you must say a mass of St. Peter, a mass of St. Paul, of St. James, or any other saint’; i. e. you must sacrifice Jesus Christ to day, in honour of St. Peter, of St. James, or any other. And that you may not imagine I belie the Romanists, you have only to read on this subject any of their theologians, or listen to what the priest says every day at mass when he reads the canon; and you will hear him say with a low voice these words, having recited the names of cer-

Their devotions to the angels I pass by. These sacred beings enjoy a very moderate portion of Roman confidence. But their invocation of the saints appears still more gross, when we call to mind that tain saints, ‘*Ut illis proficiat ad honorem*’, he prays God that this sacrifice may be profitable to their honour. If in the Old Testament any one had wished to offer sacrifices to God, in honour of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, would he not have been instantly stoned, to atone by death for the impiety of this blasphemy? Alas! in the ancient law beasts alone were killed in sacrifice.—When Christ taught his apostles, that he must go to Jerusalem, &c. to be sacrificed upon the cross, to appease his Father’s just wrath against the sins of men, St. Peter was transported with zeal, and could not bear that he should go to Jerusalem to be sacrificed, ‘*Lord spare thyself; this shall not happen.*’ Oh, if he were upon earth, and it should be said, ‘*St. Peter, this priest is going to say mass, to sacrifice the body and blood of Christ to do you honour*’, would he not hear this news with horror? Would he not say with much more reason, ‘*Lord, it shall not be so; it shall not happen to thee to be sacrificed to do me honour*’? . . . I believe that if any of the apostles or first Christians were to rise again, and appear in the Church of Rome, they would have need to learn almost their catechism, so great is the difference between the articles of faith taught in the primitive Church and those now taught in the Church of Rome.” *Des Ecotais’ Memoirs*, p. 59, which, though very worthy of perusal, are superseded by the enchaining interest which binds us down to the pages of Mr. Blanco White, to whom his readers are indebted for instruction and delight, and Protestantism for important benefits.

it is not merely those holy and blessed saints of God, the apostles, disciples, martyrs, &c. to whom their services are addressed, but equally to all and every one whom Rome pleases to admit into the general assembly of the blessed in heaven.—Dishonour is done to that “goodly company” of Christ, “of whom the world was not worthy”, when undue homage is addressed to them; but they are foully polluted when into their holy band are enrolled a race of unhallowed men living and dying in mortal sin, (if murder, persecution, rebellion, and sedition, be mortal sins,) for these are the merits which swell the calendar and fill the Pantheon of Rome. Devotion is paid alike to St. Paul, the preacher of obedience, and to Becket, a seditious and ungrateful factionist; to the meek and gentle “disciple whom Jesus loved”, and to the ferocious Dominic, the fiend of the Inquisition, “drunk with the blood of the saints.”*

PHILODOX.

Although it would be vain to deny the evidence

* The late venerable Moderator of the Waldenses, Peyran, speaking of the canonization of this firebrand, observes, sarcastically, that this was a “recompense d'autant plus magnifique qu'on trouve rarement des exemples même parmi les Payens, qui se sont montrés plus réservés en pareille occasion, et se sont contentés de bien payer leurs bourreaux, sans les honorer de l'apothéose.” *Nouvelles Lettres*, p. 53, in Mr. Sims's *Historical Defence of the Waldenses*.

adduced from the authorized services of the Church, yet, certain it is, that many members of that Church do not practise such devotions, and their divines insist, that they only solicit the prayers of the saints.

ORTHODOX.

Nay; let them adhere to the principle of which they profess to be so tenacious. If they choose to alter it, and will argue from private opinions, we have no objection. We will oppose Aquinas, Bonaventura, Bellarmin, Baronius, &c. to Gother, Bishops Milner and Baines, Dr. Lingard, Mr. Butler, &c. and a beautiful specimen of "Catholic unity" they will present.

To the Church they appealed, and the Church has answered the appeal. She renounces their expositions; she knows them not; she binds them in the same curse with Protestants. Anathema to those who do not "receive and embrace most firmly the apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and other observances and constitutions of the said Church"; and to those who "teach or think contrary" thereto. She accounts these half-Romanists worse than heretics, unnatural and foolish children, planting a dagger in the bosom of their infallible mother; and proclaiming to the world, that for ages she hath taught her people falsely, and enforced a superstitious and idolatrous devotion.

That many of her professing followers in this country do shrink from these things, I delight to think. That they are in actual ignorance of much that their Church maintains, and that they hold principles of tolerance and liberality which involves them deeply in her censure, I can vouch from personal observation. Neither is it intended to charge them, individually, with consequences they disown.—But let them not, or rather let not their teachers and advocates, to whom the real merits of the case are known, boast of their unity and consistency. Let them not attempt to silence remonstrance, and stifle inquiry, either by insidious misrepresentations to the world; by clamours of injustice against Protestants who merely draw self-evident conclusions from infallible premises; or by casting over their Church a mystic and delusive cloak of unerring guidance and indefeasible purity, at the moment when their vindication and arguments proclaim, that for many centuries she has misguided her disciples, immersed Christians in the crime of spiritual adultery, and inherently corrupted the first elements of religious service. Let them cease to deceive the unstable and incautious, and to calumniate those who have no other object than to emancipate a perverted people, and to restore their Church to her pristine purity, by speak-

ing of things as they are ; by inferences so obvious that no ingenuous mind can deny their candour, no valid argument oppugn their legitimacy. Read the defences of their modern controversialists ; compare it with the authorized language of their devotions ; and what say they less than this, “ I disown, reject, and abhor, that doctrine which the Church of Rome hath taught, and that practice which she hath enforced, for ages” ?

PHILODOX.

They will not adopt this confession ; yet Gother, one of their most eminent and popular writers, does pronounce a series of anathemas against the tenets which you presume the Church to authorize ; and those anathemas are received in the main by Bishops Challoner and Milner, Mr. Butler, &c. For instance ; “ Cursed is he that commits idolatry. Cursed is he that believes the saints to be his redeemers ; that prays to them as such ; or that gives God’s honour to them, or to any creature whatever. Amen. . Cursed is every goddess-worshipper, that believes the Virgin Mary to be more than a creature, that worships her, or puts his trust in her more than in God ; that believes her above her Son ; or that she can in any thing command him. Amen.”

ORTHODOX.

Now if we were to oppose these curses to any member of their communion who did not agree with them, we should probably be asked, and very rationally, "What right has he or they to pronounce curses? who gave to him or them power to anathematize?" Let them keep to the authorized anathemas of the Council of Trent, "Cursed is he that saith saints are not to be invoked. Cursed is he that falls not down before images. Cursed is he that does not believe transubstantiation, purgatory, &c. Cursed is he that does not receive all the observances and traditions of Rome"; and so on.

Let us, however, examine these curses separately; though I like not the handling of execrations: for when I hear a string of unauthorized condemnations and damnatory inferences from the lips of frail presumptuous mortals, I am apt to adopt the invocation, "although they curse, yet bless Thou." It would be more agreeable to leave them to the consciences of Romanists, who do but follow herein the practice of a Church, which "hath clothed herself with cursing as with a garment"; and the perusal of whose decrees and anathemas, involuntarily calls to mind that characteristic, "her mouth is full of cursing, deceit, and fraud; under

her tongue is ungodliness and vanity." The examination of these anathemas of Gother will shew that they amount to nothing, and prove no condemnation of the doctrine we reprehend. The first is, "Cursed is he that commits idolatry."—This to be sure is very satisfactory, when the point in dispute is, What is idolatry? Is it idolatry to give to created beings the honour due to the Creator, and invoke them for benefits which He alone can give? Yea, saith the Church of England. No, saith the Church of Rome. This, therefore, seems a very harmless curse. It hits not any one.

"Cursed is he that believes the saints to be his redeemers; that prays to them as such, or gives God's honour to them, or to any other creature."—We charge them not with making the "saints their Redeemers." But we charge them with making the saints their mediators, advocates, and intercessors, and with depending upon their merits, expiations, &c., and they deny not the charge; therefore, the anathematizer permits these to pass scot free. And as for the next clause, we shall not agree about the terms. We insist, that to pray to any others than God, to worship them, to serve them, to implore spiritual blessings from them, to rely on their intercession, mediation, &c., is to give his honour to creatures. But they deny it.

Again, “ Cursed is every goddess-worshipper, that believes the Virgin Mary to be more than a creature.” This is loosely worded. Why did he not say, “ Cursed is every one who worships the Virgin Mary with more than creature-worship ”? The reason is obvious. He could not have so said, without cursing Bonaventura, a saint and cardinal, and those by whom the Roman liturgies and services were compiled. What has “ goddess-worshipper ” to do with the business ? We call them not “ goddess-worshippers ”. We do not charge them with believing the Virgin to be a goddess in the strict use of the term, viz. uncreate, existing independently, &c.—“ Cursed is he that honours her, or puts his trust in her more than in God ; that believes her to be above her Son, or that she can in any thing command him ”. When a man sits down coolly to curse and anathematize his fellows, we must suppose in charity that he is very wary and cautious in promulgating his execrations, and that those who adopt them are solemnly satisfied of their propriety. It appears then that this is their divinity : he who “ honours or puts his trust ” in the Virgin Mary *as much* as in God, and “ believes her to be *equal* to her Son ”, is a good Catholic, and not to be condemned.

These curses, which are bruited about, and re-

fulminated every now and then, are a sort of Anglican-Romish cannonade ; noisy enough, but very harmless ; the Papal or Pagan idolater may safely walk in the face of the discharge ; if he be astounded with smoke and noise, it is the utmost injury he will sustain *.

PHILODOX.

It is, however, confidently asserted, that the Primitive Church always practised this invocation.

ORTHODOX.

For three centuries after Christ not a glimpse of it appears. In the fourth, the rhetorical flourishes of pulpit oratory, in certain eloquent Fathers, paved the way for the gradual admission of the Romish tenet. To enlarge upon this would occupy much time. Bear in mind three arguments equally simple and unanswerable : I. When the denial of the eternal divinity of Christ was introduced, whether by Arius or earlier heresiarchs, the argument most popular with the orthodox was that commonly urged by us against the Unitarians, viz. that religious

* For some decisive evidence and argument on this and its collateral topics, I refer with the more pleasure to Mr. Southey's "*Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*", as it presents an opportunity of offering the meed of thanks to the exertions of the able lay-advocate of our Church, and ornament of our literature.

invocation is peculiar to the Deity; a position of irrefragable force, only to be evaded by the adoption of the hypothesis of the Romanists, who here again cheerfully give the right hand of fellowship to the oppugners of the faith, and surrender to contempt and scorn every argument by which the early Christian advocates maintained the Gospel against its assailants. But be the validity of the defence what it may, this inference is clear, that the primitive believers who contended for the divinity of Christ, because God only can be the object of religious invocation, believed not that invocation may be addressed to any other than God. II. Romanists address invocation to such of the saints alone as enjoy the beatific vision of the Holy Trinity; for upon this the utility of the practice is sustained. But the general primitive belief was, that none of the saints, not even the Blessed Virgin herself, were admitted to the presence of God before the last day; but that they reposed in Hades, and, therefore, as before observed, instead of praying to them, they thus far prayed for them. Finally; the Fathers constantly rebut the heathen service of demon mediators, by this almost natural demonstration, that invocation is due to God only.

The latter remark opens to us the source of this polluted stream. The Roman worship of saints is

precisely the same with that demon worship which, however derided by some of the learned, formed with Pagans as it does with Papists, the universal devotion. The Gentiles, theoretically at least, never lost sight of One Supreme, to whom supreme worship was due. But they had two sorts of inferior gods, their demons and divos, to whom they ascribed a relative worship, and whom they specifically distinguished as domestic, tutelary, &c. The demons were spiritual, like the angels; the others were the disembodied souls of departed heroes, patriots, teachers, and otherwise eminent, like the saints. These were the mediators to go between the worshipper and the Supreme Being, who, by their interposition, was to be pacified. These they venerated, adored, and invoked, by images, pictures, and symbols; to these they dedicated temples and altars; to these they directed vows, and offered sacrifices; to their places and temples they made pilgrimages and processions.

Against the feigned "humility and will-worship" which dictated this idolatry, St. Paul cautioned the Christian Church; but, however powerfully the caution may have operated at first, it gradually became, as it seems to be now with Rome, entirely a "dead letter." The eternal enemy of God and man had imposed upon the Gentile world, by first persuading

them that it was a mark of humility not to approach God immediately, but through spiritual natures, and those of their own species whom he had honoured ; and by afterwards instilling a consequence alike pernicious, that whatever good they received from heaven was to be imputed to these benevolent agents. By a plea so gentle did that old serpent draw sinful man farther and farther from the all-merciful Creator ; for it seems a natural feeling to be rather grateful to one through whom we obtain a benefit than to him from whom it really comes ; as the criminal saved from death hath more gratitude to the friend by whose diligence his pardon is procured, than to the sovereign from whom it actually, but remotely, flows. The gracious dispensation of the gospel, when it presented a Mediator in human form, almighty to redeem, all-merciful to save, condescended to this humility, which is perhaps a feeling innate in fallen man, conscious of guilt, and of alienation from his God.

When the fires of persecution had vainly wasted their strength against the infant Church, prosperity presented to the machinations of Satan a fairer harvest ; and here again he converted the best emotions of the heart into fuel for his everlasting hostility to truth and holiness. Near the relics of martyrs, prayers had from early days been made ; at their

sepulchres, places of devotion were erected. The ancient poison was soon imperceptibly instilled, that the benefits obtained by prayers were obtained through some grace or favour by or to the martyr. As piety coalesced with superstition more and more, these and such opinions proceeded onward to perfection, until prayer was, at length, immediately addressed to the saints themselves; and this not earlier than the fourth century. It was, as I observed, unintentionally patronized by the compellations and appeals which marked the unrestrained declamations of St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and other Fathers of great eloquence and popularity; and, finally, so it was that, step by step, the tempter succeeded in bringing back the ancient demon worship into the Christian Church. It was, however, resisted in its progress by the highest authorities. The Council of Laodicea, which sat about A. D. 360, and not before the Council of Nice, as some pretend, condemned the worship of angels, denouncing it as apostasy from Christ, and idolatry. Invocation of saints was unknown, or certainly it would not have escaped censure; for if it be idolatry to invoke angels, it must be still more so to worship saints. Therefore, although we allow this practice to have dawned in the fourth century, yet its prevalence in the Church is much later.

PHILODOX.

Dupin explains the Laodicean decree to mean, that “ Christians ought not to forsake the Church to invoke angels, and keep meetings in private.”

ORTHODOX.

If Dupin is ever unfair, it is when his religion necessitates him to be so. The Council distinctly condemns those who invoke angels, as guilty of secret idolatry : “ If any one be found employed in this secret idolatry, let him be anathema ; because he hath deserted our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and joined himself to idolatry.”* If the decree was not clear enough of itself, we have the explanation of Theodoret, who, in commenting on those words of St. Paul, “ Let no man deceive you in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels,” has this remark : “ They who patronized the law, even persuaded the Colossians to worship angels ; and this passion remained with many in Phrygia and Pisidia. But a Council being assembled at Laodicea in Phrygia, forbid by a law prayer to angels.”

* Can. xxxv.

DIALOGUE IX.

OF ADORATION OF IMAGES, THE CROSS, ETC.

PHILODOX.

You consider that many of your preceding objections equally apply to the adoration of images, relics, and of the cross ?

ORTHODOX.

Undoubtedly, and with added force.

PHILODOX.

The second Council of Nice, convened expressly to settle the controversy on this point, reduced their faith into the following form : “ I confess and agree, and receive, and salute, and adore the unpolluted image of our Lord, of his holy mother, &c. In like manner, I receive and adore the images of the prophets, apostles, martyrs, fathers, and hermits ; not, however, as gods.” Anathemas are then denounced against those who do not adore them, and against those who teach not the people to adore them. The

Council of Trent confirms this by decreeing, that “the images of Christ, and of the virgin-mother of God, and other saints, are to be kept and retained, especially in Churches, and due honour and veneration to be given to them; not that we believe there is any divinity or power in them, for which they ought to be worshipped, or that any thing is to be asked of them, or confidence placed in them, as was anciently done by the heathen.”

ORTHODOX.

By pausing at these words, I perceive you have taken the decree as it is found in Dr. Milner and others. But the Council goes on thus:—“but because the honour which is exhibited to images is referred to the prototype, or thing represented by them; so that by the image which we kiss, and before which we kneel or bow, we adore Christ and reverence his saints, whom the said image represents.”—By which it appears, as well as from the statements of their teachers, that the same divine worship is paid to the image as to God himself; and the sole difference is, that the worship is transitive to the former, and terminative to the latter.

PHILODOX.

Yet surely it is true, that the honour or dishonour

done to an image or picture, regards rather the original than the senseless stock or canvas. As he who breaks the coin or picture of the monarch insults not that, but the monarch. Do not the peers bow to the throne in the house of Lords ? Which reverence passes to the king. And do not you, in a court of justice, reverently kiss the volume which represents the word of God ?

ORTHODOX.

Civil honour may be paid to the picture or throne of a monarch, because they are *civil* things themselves ; but unless you can shew that the images of Christ and the saints are as *sacred* as those whom they represent, the parallel is of no force. It would, indeed, be an insult to God to profane the elements of the sacraments, which he hath appointed ; but it is no dishonour to him to break the images which he hath forbidden to be made.

Their Church tells us, that “ he who adores the image adores in it the person of him whom it represents ” ; and no one disputes it. As to the sovereign is due absolute civil respect, a relative respect is due to the throne also. To the written word of God moral reverence is due ; and an external act of moral reverence, enjoined by the law of the land, is paid. Thus he who adores the image of Christ adores in it

the person of Christ. Of course, the image is adored with supreme divine worship. That the worship is transitive, alters not its essence. Essential divine worship is hereby paid to a stock or stone. This is the crime of the heathen ; the crime denounced in the word of God. It is both in degree and kind the same worship as the Pagan worship of idols ; and the arguments of Protestants are but transcripts of those urged by Arnobius, Minucius, &c. against the Gentiles. This is particularly the case in the adoration of the cross. Here a piece of wood is addressed with the same invocations as Christ himself ; and every blessing, spiritual and temporal, implored from the senseless stock. “ Hail ! O cross ! triumphal sign ! true salvation of the world ! Among wood there is none such in leaf, and flower, and germ. Christian medicine, save the whole ; heal the sick,” &c. And again, “ Hail ! O cross ! our only hope in glorious triumph ; increase grace to the pious, and blot out the crimes of the guilty.” This is the language of their most solemn services *. Did Paganism, in its

* In conformity herewith, the elegant Bourdaloue, in the opening of one of his sermons, “ Sur la Passion ”, before the French court, uses this apostrophe ; “ Croix adorable, nous les (nos larmes) repandrons devant vous, et vous leur communiquerez cette vertu céleste, et ce caractère de sainteté que vous reçûtes en recevant dans vos bras le saint des saints. Plein de

darkest gloom, produce idolatry more gross? Are we to wonder that the religion of papal countries is little else than the full operation of this sin in its most offensive forms? Is the practical effect of such a creed forbidden or unsanctioned? Go to Rome; enter as it were into the presence of the infallible Head of the Church and his Council, in their own cathedral: visit the proud metropolitan temple of the Roman world. Take, for an example, the adoration paid to what was once the statue of heathen Jove, now the "prototype" of the apostle Peter. "With what apparent fervour of devotion all ranks and ages, and sexes, kneel to and kiss the toe of this brazen image. They rub it against their foreheads, and press it against their lips, with the most reverential piety. I have sat by the hour", says an interesting traveller, "to see the crowds of people who flock in to perform this ceremony, waiting for their turn to kiss."*

PHILODOX.

You cannot argue against the use from the abuse of a thing.

ORTHODOX.

Unhappily, this is the use, and not the abuse. If *cette confiance, nous avons recours à vous, et nous vous disons avec toute l'église, O Crux, ave!*"

* Matthews' "Diary of an Invalid."

the unerring dictate of infallibility proclaims that to an image the same reverence is due as to Christ himself, is not this the natural and just devotion of the people? Who is to wonder that worship rests on the senseless stock, and ascends no higher? Nay, is it not uniformly encouraged by their guides and teachers? Else what mean those juggling miracles constantly forged to maintain the dignity of these idols, leading to an entire trust in them, and in the omnipotence of the priest, under whose control, and at whose pleasure, these wonderments take place? Could terms be found sufficient to express abhorrence and disgust, if our English prelacy and priesthood were to confederate in a fraud like that annual Neapolitan delusion, the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, in which bishops, dignitaries, and the whole church authority, are patrons and agents? What is the effect of such wretched wickedness, but to debase a deluded people still deeper in the gulf of idolatry and superstition?—All terminates in the priesthood: for the poor saint is, at once, the object of veneration and reviling, of contempt and awe.

Against this idolatry revived in the heart of the Christian Church, what have we to oppose, if that tremendous law be disregarded, which pealed in

thunder from the burning summit of the holy mount: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments?"

Need we wonder that a rebellious and guilty Church erased this commandment from her laws, whilst she re-established idolatry among the nations whence the cross had banished it; and, accumulating crime on crime, hid from the people the measure of their enormities.

PHILODOX.

"Many disputants are ignorant enough to suppose, that the division of the Decalogue in the prayer-book was copied from the original copy of the Pentateuch. But in the Hebrew, for some thousands of years, there was no mark of separation between one commandment and another." They add, "it is a gross calumny to say they suppress

any part of the Decalogue ; for it all appears in their Bibles, and all their most approved catechisms.”*

ORTHODOX.

The first part of this is mere evasion, and the latter is untrue. At the Reformation, the Lutherans retained the Roman custom of accounting the first and second commandments to be but one, and dividing the tenth into two ; thus making three commandments to the first table, and seven to the second. The Calvinists, more consistently, divided them as they stand in our bibles and prayer-books. We are not, therefore, disputing with Rome about the *arrangement*, but about the *omission* ; although the arrangement in some of their catechisms† is out of all order, the first clause of the tenth being thrust into the room of the second commandment ; thus confounding the two tables, the duty towards man with the duty towards God.

To say that the whole appears in “ all their most approved catechisms ” is so untrue, that Romanists of less daring than Dr. Milner, have fully admitted the contrary, by urging arguments in defence of it. In fact, all who know anything of

* End of Controversy, L. xxxiv.

† Butler’s, ex. gr.

the subject know the omission to be so notorious, that it would be waste of time to prove it. It is confessedly omitted in the manuals and short catechisms for the people, which are the very places where it ought to be found.—But “it appears in all their Bibles.” So it may : and is of as much service there as its appearance in the Hebrew. What is the use of it in the scriptures, when the people are not allowed to read the scriptures ?

PHILODOX.

In defence of the omission, it is alleged, that the second commandment is only an explanation of the first.

ORTHODOX.

And therefore useless, I suppose. But that it is useless, their own practice refutes ; for if it be an “ explanation”, it is sufficient to convict them of disobedience to the precept. It is, however, palpably another commandment. The first forbids to worship any God but Jehovah. The second forbids to worship him by any image ; or to fall down before any image with religious service ; denouncing a dreadful sentence upon all who are guilty of this practice. How dare they keep from their people so important a part of God’s eternal law, confirmed by sanctions more awful than any other ; announcing ven-

geance against transgressors and their offspring, and boundless mercy to those who so love him as to keep his commandments generally; and this one especially, to which these threats and promises are annexed? This is that moral law of God which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil; in open rebellion to which, Rome exists, and trains her people. No denunciation of her corruptions can escape Protestant pen so awful, so immediate as this. The evasion and subterfuge of misdirected wisdom appal the pious mind, when contrasted with the guilt of eluding the force, and enervating the precept, of the everlasting law of the Ruler of the universe. Vain distinctions framed in the perverted imaginations of fallen creatures, serve but to guide serious meditation to the source of all our spiritual wretchedness: "God made man perfect, but he hath found out many inventions."

DIALOGUE X.

OF THE ACCUSATIONS OF IDOLATRY, SCHISM, AND HERESY.

PHILODOX.

I will not occupy your time, at present, by particular discussion of the remaining tenets in dispute; but will only touch upon some general epithets, which I have occasionally heard you utter, and the verity of which, I presume, you rest not entirely on the topics before discussed. Your Church distinctly pronounces the Church of Rome “idolatrous”; declaring the adoration of the Eucharistic elements, “idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians.” In her homilies, she constantly teaches her people to view the Roman Church as idolatrous in many respects. The Reformers, and all your great theologists, take this as a point perfectly indisputable; even those who were least unfavourable to the old religion, as Archbishop Laud, Dr. Heylin, Leslie, the other nonjurors, &c. adopt the same phraseology. Yet your modern divines seem ashamed of it, and, as Dr. Milner remarks, “no Protestant

of learning or character now repeats it." So that the language of all your illustrious controversialists seems to be disclaimed ; and the homilies scarcely to be accounted a criterion of the present opinion of the Anglican Church.

ORTHODOX.

This is meant, I presume, to give force to the reiterated charge, that we have forsaken our old belief. You have truly stated the authoritative decision of our Church, which is not confined to the homilies. But if it was, their language is decisive to the point. She has declared that those discourses contain "a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times." To suppose that they bear false evidence to the opinion of the Church, which promulgates them for the instruction of the people, is absurd. It follows not, that we are to approve their entire diction ; but that doctrine, which is "necessary" at any time, must be true at all times. And if there is any part of the homilies to which, more than another, the commendation refers, it is that which bears upon the Romish tenets, as being the errors of which a refutation, by "godly and wholesome doctrine", was especially "necessary for those times." It is a libel on the Church of England to suppose that

she would publish a set of sermons so strongly impressing and urging what she accounted doubtful or unimportant, much less untrue*.

I scarcely recollect a divine whose name and opinion are entitled to reverence in our Church, that has hesitated on the subject. Dr. Milner designates Bishop Horsley as “the great ornament of the episcopal bench”, and “the light and ornament of the English Church.” Now, let us hear that eminent prelate on the point: “At this day, in the Church of Rome, the worship of the ever-blessed Trinity subsists in preposterous conjunction with the idolatrous worship of canonized men and inanimate relics.” Again; “the idolaters of antiquity and the papists of modern times seem much upon a footing.” And further; “the Church of Rome is at this day a corrupt Church; a Church corrupted with idolatry; with idolatry very much the same in kind and in degree with the worst that ever prevailed among the Egyptians or the Canaanites.”†

* “Since there are so many of the homilies that charge the Church of Rome with idolatry, and that from so many different topics; no man who thinks that Church is not guilty of idolatry, can, with a good conscience, subscribe this article, that the homilies ‘contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times.’”—Bp. Burnet.

† On the Prophecies of the Messiah.

PHILODOX.

But is it not more candid to adopt the conclusion of Bishop Taylor, who admits that their worship of the elements, at least, has nothing idolatrical in it?

ORTHODOX.

This was an hypothesis, not the deliberate opinion, of Bishop Taylor. No one has more pointedly accused them of idolatry, nor more fully made good the accusation than he has done.

PHILODOX.

But, “if he contradicts himself in other works, are they to renounce the present important concession?” *

ORTHODOX.

He contradicts not himself, for he had conceded nothing. The ‘Liberty of Prophesying’, in which the passage so often quoted occurs, had for its object, not to explain doctrines, but to repel persecution. He therefore urges for Romanists, in common with other erring sects, not his own opinions, but those, he says, “by which the poor creatures allow themselves to be deceived.” The truth or falsehood of these tenets he discusses not, but simply shows that they were not of a kind to call for the interference

* Faith and Doctrine of the Catholic Church proved, &c.

of the state. But when they did, dogmatically, come before him, he pronounces them false and idolatrous; and rejects his own hypothesis, as a learned and truly Protestant prelate remarks, "with contempt and ridicule."*

PHILODOX.

But why continue an accusation which seems merely calculated to give offence?

ORTHODOX.

Were it *merely* calculated to give offence, it would be both wisdom and duty to forbear. But idolatry is too solemn a thing to be trifled with. If the charge be valid, what human consideration can justify those who stifle the voice of God against it? Are we, from fear of giving offence, to deny or withhold a verity of vital importance to the honour of God, the well-being of religion, and the eternal interest of thousands? Was truth ever promoted by falsification or concealment? Was Christianity *THUS* established, or *THUS* reformed? Would the first believers, had they been contemporary with Socrates or Plato, have shrunk from the charge of idolatry against the Pagan system, because they

* Bishop Burgess' "Popery incapable of Union," &c.

venerated the philosophers who honoured it by their wisdom, and adorned it by their virtue? I would not, for a meed beyond human wealth, give causeless offence to or wantonly wound the conscience of any man: I forget not the “burning and shining lights”, whose beams have pierced the Romish gloom even in her darkest days; nor will I bend against them her anathemas, levelled at thousands of the best and holiest of the saints of Christ, lest I be found, as Rome hath so often been, “cursing whom God hath not cursed, and defying whom the Lord hath not defied.” We are not speaking of individuals, but judging her, as she demands to be judged, by her creeds, her formulas, her observances. If any one thus judging, and satisfied of the truth of the accusation, sinks under that “fear of man which bringeth a snare”, he bursts the tie of charity which he owes to his fellow mortals, even to the transgressing Church herself; and violates the first dictate of an enlightened conscience, obedience to the law of God.

Believing the accusation of the Church of England to be as true as it is decisive, and holding the Church of Rome to be idolatrous, I should tremble not to avow it. If mistaken, it is a mistake I hold in common with the thousands who in the devastated vales of Piedmont, in the fires of Britain, in the

desolation of the Netherlands, and wherever persecution "found them out", sealed the sincerity of this belief with their blood. I hold it in common with Hall, and Usher, and Field, and Morton, and Barrow, and Taylor, and Chillingworth, and Burnet, and Bull, and Leighton, and Stillingfleet, and Tillotson, and Wake, and Secker, and Horsley, and Porteus ; in short, with almost every name, good, great, and venerable, which the United Church presents.

PHILODOX.

Whilst Rome invariably designates you as Schismatics, you attempt to retort the charge ; but surely without reason. Whatever her transgressions, that of *schism* can scarcely be made out against her whose characteristic trait is *Unity*.

ORTHODOX.

Few accusations can more easily be verified. Rome is unquestionably the most schismatic of communities. Schism has been her peculiar characteristic. For, passing by internal contentions, in which no Church has ever been more fertile, it has been her accustomed policy, or sport, to cut off, and cast from the Christian pale, as far as her intentions and censures could effect it, all who dissent or differ from her. Even early as the second and

third centuries, before usurpation and corruption had so wretchedly defiled her, this factious temper marked her rulers; in the rash anathema of Pope Victor against the Asiatics, so severely reproved by St. Irenæus; and in the heretical excommunication by Stephen of those whose opinion was less erroneous than his own; a measure severely retorted by St. Cyprian and Firmilian, in language which is now as forcible as when first adopted. They tell him that his excommunication availed nothing, except to prove himself a schismatic, and cut himself off from the body of Christ; inasmuch as he who insolently attempts to sever true branches from the vine, more deserves the character of schismatic than he who, indulging a fastidious or unruly spirit, merely withdraws from the communion of his brethren.

It would fill a volume of no ordinary size to abstract the schismatical history of this Church. At the present hour, she stands in the position of the Donatist heretics of the fifth century; at war with every other community of believers, renewing her fulminations of anathema and threat against the "rebels and deserters" who bend not the knee before her. And in her endless contests seldom has it occurred, that she has not been the aggressor. Notoriously was she so in that great secession by

which she was dismembered at the Reformation. When Luther humbly and reverently proposed his theses on a practical scandal which no one ventures now publicly to defend, he was silenced by excommunication; and their advocates vindicate the fact. When the Reformers entreated that all controversies might be discussed by the word of God and by Catholic tradition in a free council, they were driven out from the communion of the Church by execrations, answered by the sword, and are still denounced as schismatics for their secession, by an annual series of invective.—But we may allude to a division even less questionable. In the great schism which severed the Greek from the Latin Church, the latter was the offending party. By her single authority, in defiance of the decree of a general council, the creed was altered, and the first remonstrance was met by the customary reply, excommunication. It was not until wearied out with endless contentions, overborne by his tyranny, and weakened by his usurpations, that the other patriarchs of the Christian Church tore asunder the bond of union with the Roman pontiff, in those memorable words: “ *Thy greatness we know; thy covetousness we cannot satisfy; thy encroachments we can no longer endure: live by thyself.*”*

* Quoted in Field “Of the Church,” B. v. c. 39.

PHILODOX.

But has not Protestantism invariably led to schism? Has it not trampled order under foot? In many places annihilated episcopacy, and extinguished discipline?

ORTHODOX.

Let those Protestants whom the charge affects reply to it; we are free. But the remark has nothing to do with our discussion. We are examining not the essential unity of the Catholic Church, but the infallibility of the Church of Rome: not our errors, but her schism; which, however, touches upon your objection. Of the annihilation of episcopacy and ecclesiastical discipline, who set the earliest example? Who first gave presbyters power of ordination without the intervention of a bishop? The Church of Rome. Who trampled on episcopacy, by constituting one prelate alone, and degrading the rest to the office of his deputies? The Church of Rome. Who excluded the divine right of bishops from the unerring decrees of Trent? The Church of Rome. Who first proclaimed the uselessness of episcopal jurisdiction, by introducing exempt peculiars, and freeing precincts, &c. from diocesan control? The Church of Rome. Who authorized the regulars, monks, and friars, to invade

the rights of bishops and clergy? The Church of Rome. Who commenced itinerant preaching by sending through parishes and dioceses, rambling unordained missionaries, freed from canonical subjection? The Church of Rome. Ill beseems it her, of all communities, to rail at the violation of discipline by those who have merely studied in her school, and scarcely improved upon her practice. But it is unnecessary to enlarge on this; enough has been said to establish the charge of Schism.

PHILODOX.

The accusation of *heresy* is, of course, grounded upon the erroneousness of the doctrines we have already examined.

ORTHODOX.

Not exclusively. There are a few other points which, although they certainly are not like those we have before considered, nor can be said to be the present "practical" divinity of the Church; yet are they even more fatal to the pretence of infallibility, because the error is far less a subject of controversy.

I. Of OATHS. That God has, in the most solemn terms, pronounced the inviolability of an oath it is unnecessary to shew. Yet the Church of Rome has taught, again and again, that an oath

may and ought to be violated when it is “contrary to the utility of the Church”. Such, for instance, are the words of the sixteenth canon of the second Lateran Council; and the often recited case of the martyr Huss is an infallible practical illustration of this wicked decree.

PHILODOX.

The Council of Constance broke no faith with Huss. And if it had, although it was a general council, yet it was essentially defective in this respect, that there was no Pope at the time.

ORTHODOX.

The council “broke not its faith”, admittedly; but it definitively taught, that “no safe conduct nor engagement is to be kept with heretics.” It is also true, that there was “no Pope at the time”; but Martin V. afterwards confirmed the decree, nay, doubly confirmed it; for in a letter subsequently written to Alexander, general of the Lithuanians, he issues the following oracle: “If you have, in any way, promised to undertake the defence of these [heretics], know, that you *could not give your faith to heretics*, who are violators of the holy faith; and *you will sin mortally if you keep it.*” Therefore, this is the inference of

Simanca: "Heretics are justly burned with righteous flames, according to the most grave determination of the Council of Constance, even though they have received promise of safety."

But it is needless to quote particular examples. Popes and councils have universally absolved from oaths at their will and pleasure.—"I am persuaded", says Lord Clarendon, "if there was a short collection of the bulls and dispensations the Popes have granted from time to time, for the dissolving and making of marriages; the breaking of oaths and lawful contracts; absolving of perjuries, and the like; they would be found to have introduced more mischief into the Christian world, and brought more scandal upon the Christian religion than all the heretics whom they have condemned from the time of the apostles."*

Connected with this of oaths, is the conduct of their Church respecting MARRIAGE. Our Lord hath declared the marriage vow indissoluble, save in the case of adultery. The Pope has dissolved this vow at pleasure.—On the other hand, the "prohibited degrees" are degrees of prohibition by the divine law. These also the Pope dispenses with as seemeth him good: thus "putting asunder those whom God hath joined together", and

* Religion and Policy.

joining together those whom God hath put asunder.

II. Another of her heresies is religious PERSECUTION. This, for many centuries, she uniformly taught and practised. The second and third Lateran councils decreed it, and the Church acted upon it. The persecutions of the Waldenses, &c. were by her commands; those against the Protestants were in conformity to her sentence, and the result of her unwearied instigation. When the ferocious Alva was let loose upon the Netherlands, it was with her approbation. When the massacre of St. Bartholomew took place, the Pope and his court returned praises and laud to Him who “came not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” And the Inquisition, whose very charter of incorporation is persecution, and denial of the rights of conscience, is exclusively the tribunal of the Church; founded by her fiat, and existing at her nod.

III. The gospel hath taught submission to the higher powers, and pronounced, that they “who resist shall receive damnation.” This she has annulled, by proclaiming the duty of REBELLION. It is her decree, that subjects are absolved from allegiance, ipso facto, by the heresy of their sovereign; that heretical princes are no longer princes, but are deposed, and may be murdered. By treason

and rebellion against her liege emperor, did the Roman See obtain her "bad eminence." Almost invariably was the papal power applied to the worst purposes; in deposing and substituting monarchs; stirring up wars and tumults; upholding anarchy or despotism; encouraging persecutions and murders; fomenting conspiracies, plots, and cabals. In France, when Henry III. and IV. fell by the hand of regicides, the Church of Rome sang *Te Deum* on each occasion. In this country, whilst John contended for his just prerogative, he was excommunicated, his subjects excited against him, an intruder thrust into the primacy, and the kingdom given to a French invader. But when the unhappy monarch had become the vassal of this spiritual tyranny, and his people had wrested *Magna Charta* from him, they were excommunicated in turn, the charter annulled, and the intrusive primate and invader condemned. In a later period, our first dissenters were excited by Romish agents. The discontents against Charles I. were fanned by the like emissaries: and in Ireland, the rebellion was upheld by the nuncio, who arrived in that Rome-ridden island, with bulls, benedictions, anathemas, and the whole cargo of Church combustibles. He was general of the rebels; ruled them with sovereign authority; and when they would

have returned to their allegiance, and had solemnly sworn to do so, he absolved them from their oath, and excommunicated those who kept it: to which conduct Clarendon imputes the ruin of his master.

PHILODOX.

You are aware that Mr. Butler admits, that the Pope “ claimed, by divine gift, a right to exercise supreme temporal power over all Christian sovereigns, when a great good to religion required it; and that this claim was unfounded? Both the Gospel and tradition declared against it.” *

ORTHODOX.

How then can they trust their eternal interests to a guide, who for ages “ claimed by divine gift a supreme power”, which the word of God did not sanction; and perverted “ the Gospel and tradition” to establish a tyranny opposed to both? When this twofold source of truth was thus stopped up, were not all who revered the one and honoured the other, bound by every tie, human and divine, to re-open the fountain of salvation, and to tear up these unhallowed dams which withheld its salutary streams?

But Mr. Butler states not the principle with

* Book of the Roman Catholic Church, L. ix.

strict precision. The Church of Rome, however tyrannical and treacherous, seldom argued independently. Want of evidence generally compels her to form her premises out of nothing ; but if she can persuade us to admit these, the conclusion is rarely illogical. If we allow her *spiritual* empire, she boldly infers that *temporal* is therein comprised ; that the former cannot operate where the latter is withheld ; that faith prescribes the rule of life, inasmuch as Christian morality derives its operative principle therefrom. So argues Bellarmin, and her ablest advocates. And who is the disputant that has yet refuted them ?

PHILODOX.

Still Magna Charta, the basis of our civil and religious liberties, was obtained in times when Rome predominated.

ORTHODOX.

So they fail not to remind us.—Perhaps Magna Charta was, accidentally, the stepping-stone of freedom. I say *accidentally*, for the feudal prelates and barons who procured it, never contemplated so wild a vision as civil and religious freedom would have then appeared. But the impotent caprices of a dastardly and usurping prince presented an op-

portunity of securing their own immunities, and restoring the ancient privileges lost under the Norman dynasty. And be this Charter what it may, it was in opposition to Rome that it was procured. In a general council were all its abettors and promoters denounced and condemned; and monarchs enforced by the barons to swear to it, were regularly absolved by the Pope. Three several times was this the case with Edward I.

England was in as abject slavery after the confirmation of Magna Charta as before. The dawn of our national prosperity opened with the Reformation. The restored light of the gospel dispersed the damp of civil despotism, with the deeper mists of superstition and error. The security of our constitution rests upon the Habeas Corpus and the Bill of Rights; Protestant acts, purchased through the fire, and happily cemented by that corner stone of freedom, a Protestant dynasty.

It is absurd to talk of the Roman Church advocating or permitting religious liberty. The tolerance of sects by our establishment excites their severest animadversions. In fact, not more has infallible decree than inseparable consequence announced the guilt of toleration. She who claims the arrogant title of "mistress of all Churches", who expressly denounces the members of other

communities as “rebels” and “deserters”, amenable to be “tried, condemned, and punished”, when she has the power, must be permanently and inherently persecuting. Her talons may be clipped; her weapons may be wrested from her hand; but that inalienable right of responsible beings, accountability of opinion to Almighty God alone, exists not in safety where Rome predominates in full possession of her proud assumptions.

But it is time to bring our discussion to a close. Let us then remember, that what are the present characteristics of Catholicism, were heretofore the features of heresy. Transubstantiation was introduced by the Eutychians; and condemned; but now the great doctrine of Roman creed. The sacramental cup was first withheld by the Manichees; then denounced; now approved. The first angel-worshippers were the heretical sect of the Angelics; then condemned; now restored. The first worship of the Virgin was the Collyridian; then heresy; now the universal practice. Adoration of images was introduced by the Gnostics; then anathematized; now maintained. The Apocrypha was rejected by the primitive Church; now canonized. The first Christians knew but two sacraments alone; now seven are adopted. A universal bishop was heretofore denounced as the “forerunner of Anti-

christ"; but is now the link of union to the Catholic Church.

If, then, to teach and practise what in the primitive Church was heresy, be heretical; and if to violate and dispense with the obligations of morality and the laws of God, be heretical; if to teach and practise schism, be schismatical; if to practise and teach idolatry, be idolatrous; then is the Church of Rome heretical, for heresy she teaches and practises; then is she schismatical, for schism she practises and teaches; then is she idolatrous, for idolatry she practises and teaches. And if the truth of even a portion of this censure has been established in our conferences, Infallibility vanishes, like the "baseless fabric of a vision."

That many Romanists are ignorant of what their Church really teaches; that they know no more of her than what their spiritual guides reveal, and are less acquainted with many of her tenets than with the dogmas of the Koran; my own personal knowledge of amiable and pious individuals bearing the outward symbol of Rome, enables me to testify. But all the gross and dangerous principles adverted to she has promulged; and as her glory is that she can never vary, they stand at this day her recorded creed; sealed with the signet of infallibility, and confirmed by the exclusion from salvation to all

who question or disown their verity. The Anglican Church has disowned them; shrinks from alliance with the community by which they are sanctioned; and protests against her perversions of the faith.

For that light of liberty and life which beams upon this highly favoured land, which gives lustre to the palace, and sheds joy and comfort upon the meanest cottage, we are indebted to the establishment of Protestantism; to the labours and afflictions of our Reformers, guided by the watchful care of Him, in whose unfailing promise the vessel of salvation rides triumphant through the tempests of human and infernal power, over the billows of a fallen and rebellious world. The blessings which His undeserved benignity hath conferred upon us, it is our duty and our wisdom to preserve, at every peril, unsullied and incorrupt, as our suffering fathers bequeathed them to us.

God grant, that neither our causeless divisions, nor our inconsistent conduct, neither our insensibility to, nor our neglect of, the manifold advantages we possess, may provoke Him to withdraw these mercies from us. Every discerning friend of his country's real honour, happiness, and peace, will not cease to implore that presiding Spirit who hath led the venerable guardian of the national faith in safety through many a fiery trial, to sustain her, from age

to age, increasing in numbers, in extent, in piety, in zeal; keeping before her eyes that early time, when the faith of Rome was “spoken of through all the world”; and receiving the caution which *her* gradual declension proclaims to every member and community of Christ,—that there is no charge so important as the preservation of God’s revealed will; no deposit which conveys so fearful a responsibility upon those to whom it is committed; no object, however arduous and distant, so glorious in pursuit, as the reduction of the Universal Church to her pristine purity, abounding in its genuine fruits, unity, holiness, and love.



NOTES.

PAGE 132. “ *The Council of Florence was then sitting,*” &c.—This oversight is so obvious as scarcely to need correction. The Council of Florence was a continuation of that of Ferrara, which was convened in consequence of the arrival of the Greeks: the writer had confused in his mind, the Council of Florence with that of Basil, which “ was then sitting”, in hostility to the Pope.

Distance and absence are said to be sources of the sublime. Those who venerate the grave names of General Councils, will do well to enter into their penetralia, to ascertain the evidence of that spiritual guidance, by which they are assumed to be preserved from error. Sarpi, or even Pallavicini, may suffice for the Council of Trent; and Sgyropulus will be a still more efficient guide to explore the conclaves of Ferrara and Florence, “ *quorum pars magna fuit.*”

Page 242.—The original of Augustin runs thus: “ *Cultores dæmonum dicuntur mereri temporalia quædam solatia.*” De Civ. Dei, L. v.—“ *Qui pro tot persecutionibus et blasphemiiis vas electionis meruit nominari.*” De Pred. et Grat.—“ *Dura cervix in illo populo qui ex omni mundo electus est, qui de servitute decem miraculis meruit liberari.*” Ibid.

But the Vulgate itself uses the term *meruit* in the mere signification *to obtain*; as Gen. iv. 13. is thus rendered, “Major est iniquitas mea, quam ut *veniam merear*”; and still more obviously in Joshua, xi. 20, “Domini enim sententia fuerat, ut indurarentur corda eorum, et pugnarent contra Israel, et caderent, et non *mererentur ullam clementiam*, ac perirent”; which, rendered, “not to obtain mercy”, is consistent with itself, as well as with the Hebrew and Septuagint.

THE END.

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